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THE AMERICAN SPECTATOR

JANUARY 1987 A MONTHLY REVIEW EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

Germany Before the Election • Vietnam After Liberation

Tim W. Ferguson: What Next for Conservatives?

Dixy Lee Ray: The Great Acid Rain Debate

Roses for a First Lady, by Thomas Mallon

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Handel, Water Music The English Concert/Pinnock. "Quite the best performance...now on the market."—Gramophone Archiv *DIGITAL* 115306

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Perlman: Mozart, Violin Concertos Nos. 3 & 5 Vienna Philharmonic/Levine. "Radiantly sumptuous."—High Fidelity DG *DIGITAL* 115146

America, The Dream Goes On The Boston Pops/Williams. Title song, *America, Battle Hymn Of The Republic,* more. Philips *DIGITAL* 115134

Handel, Messiah (Highlights) Musica Sacra/Westenburg. *Hallelujah Chorus, I Know That My Redeemer Liveth,* more. RCA *DIGITAL* 153586

Rubinstein: Rachmaninoff, Piano Concerto No. 2; Rhapsody On A Theme Of Paganini Chicago Symphony/Reiner. RCA 170232

Ravel, Daphnis et Chloé (Complete) Montreal Symphony/Dutoit. "An absolute dream performance."—Stereo Review London *DIGITAL* 115520

Brahms, Cello Sonatas Yo-Yo Ma, cello; Emanuel Ax, piano. 1985 Grammy Award Winner, Best Chamber Music Performance! RCA *DIGITAL* 154044

Sir Georg Solti

Pavarotti: Passione Title song, *La Palummella,* 10 more. "A sumptuous festival of Neapolitan plums."—Opera News London *DIGITAL* 115441

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Romantic Organ Music Peter Hurford plays Widor, Vierne, Alain, Franck, Karg-Elert, Brahms, Mendelssohn & Reger. Argo *DIGITAL* 115221

The Canadian Brass: High, Bright, Light & Clear Air On The G String, Masterpiece Theatre Theme, other Baroque gems. RCA *DIGITAL* 144529

Richard Stoltzman: Begin Sweet World Title song, *Amazing Grace, Clouds, Abide With Me/Blue Monk, Morning Song,* more. RCA *DIGITAL* 150414

Horowitz In London Recorded live! Schumann, Kinderscenen; Chopin, Polonaise-Fantaisie & Ballade No. 1; more. RCA *DIGITAL* 162507

Orff, Carmina Burana Hendricks, Aler, Hagegård. London Symphony Chorus & Orchestra conducted by Eduardo Mata. RCA *DIGITAL* 144503

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Pachelbel, Canon in D Also includes other works by Pachelbel & Fasch. Maurice André, trumpet; Paillard Chamber Orchestra. RCA 133877

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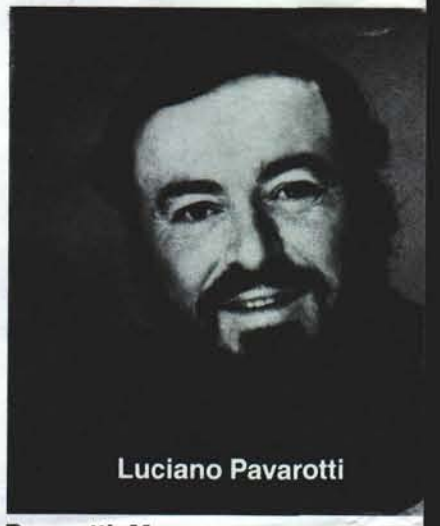
Julian Bream: Music Of Spain, Vol. 5 Albéniz & Granados on guitar. "Electrifying...A treasurable disc."—Gramophone RCA *DIGITAL* 114746

Gershwin, Rhapsody In Blue; An American In Paris; Concerto Pittsburgh Symphony/Previn (pianist & conductor). Philips *DIGITAL* 115437

Galway Plays Khachaturian Flute Concerto; Sabre Dance; Masquerade: Waltz; Adagio Of Spartacus And Phrygia. RCA *DIGITAL* 160162


Luciano Pavarotti

Pavarotti: Mamma With Henry Mancini: Title song, *Non ti scordar di me, Musica proibita, Vieni sul mar,* 12 more. London *DIGITAL* 115310

Mahler, Symphony No. 4 Kiri te Kanawa, soprano. Sir Georg Solti conducts the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. London *DIGITAL* 115092

Rudolf Serkin: Mozart, Piano Concertos Nos. 12 & 20 "He makes every phrase glow with life."—Stereo Review DG *DIGITAL* 115062

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Reich, Variations For Orchestra; Adams, Shaker Loops San Francisco Symphony Orchestra led by Edo de Waart. Philips *DIGITAL* 115479

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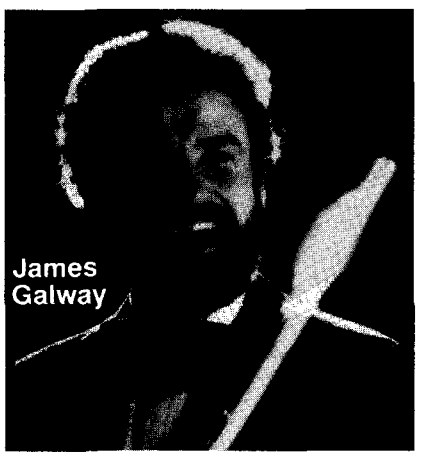

Artur Rubinstein: Chopin, 14 Waltzes "[His] playing is relaxed, assured, and wonderfully controlled."—American Record Guide RCA 101987

Mozart, Symphonies Nos. 40 in G Minor & 41 in C (Jupiter) James Levine conducts the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. RCA *DIGITAL* 104810

Kiri te Kanawa: Blue Skies With Nelson Riddle: Title song, *Speak Low, How High The Moon, So In Love*, 8 more. London *DIGITAL* 115035

The Canadian Brass: The Village Band A Stephen Foster Treasury, A Sousa Collection, Flight Of The Bumblebee, more. RCA *DIGITAL* 134440

Bach, Organ Works Daniel Chorzempa plays the Toccata & Fugue in D Minor; the Prelude, Largo & Fugue in C; more. Philips *DIGITAL* 115193

Galway & Mancini: In The Pink *The Pink Panther, Breakfast At Tiffany's, Pennywhistle Jig, Two For The Road*, more. RCA *DIGITAL* 151758

Vaughan Williams, Fantasia On A Theme By Thomas Tallis; Fantasia On Greensleeves; more Academy of St. Martin/Marriner. Argo 105459

Debussy, La Mer; Nocturnes Boston Symphony Orchestra/Davis. "The BSO is in tip-top form throughout." —Ovation Philips *DIGITAL* 115068

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Ashkenazy Plays Ravel Gaspard de la nuit; Valses nobles et sentimentales; Pavane pour une infante défunte. London *DIGITAL* 115101

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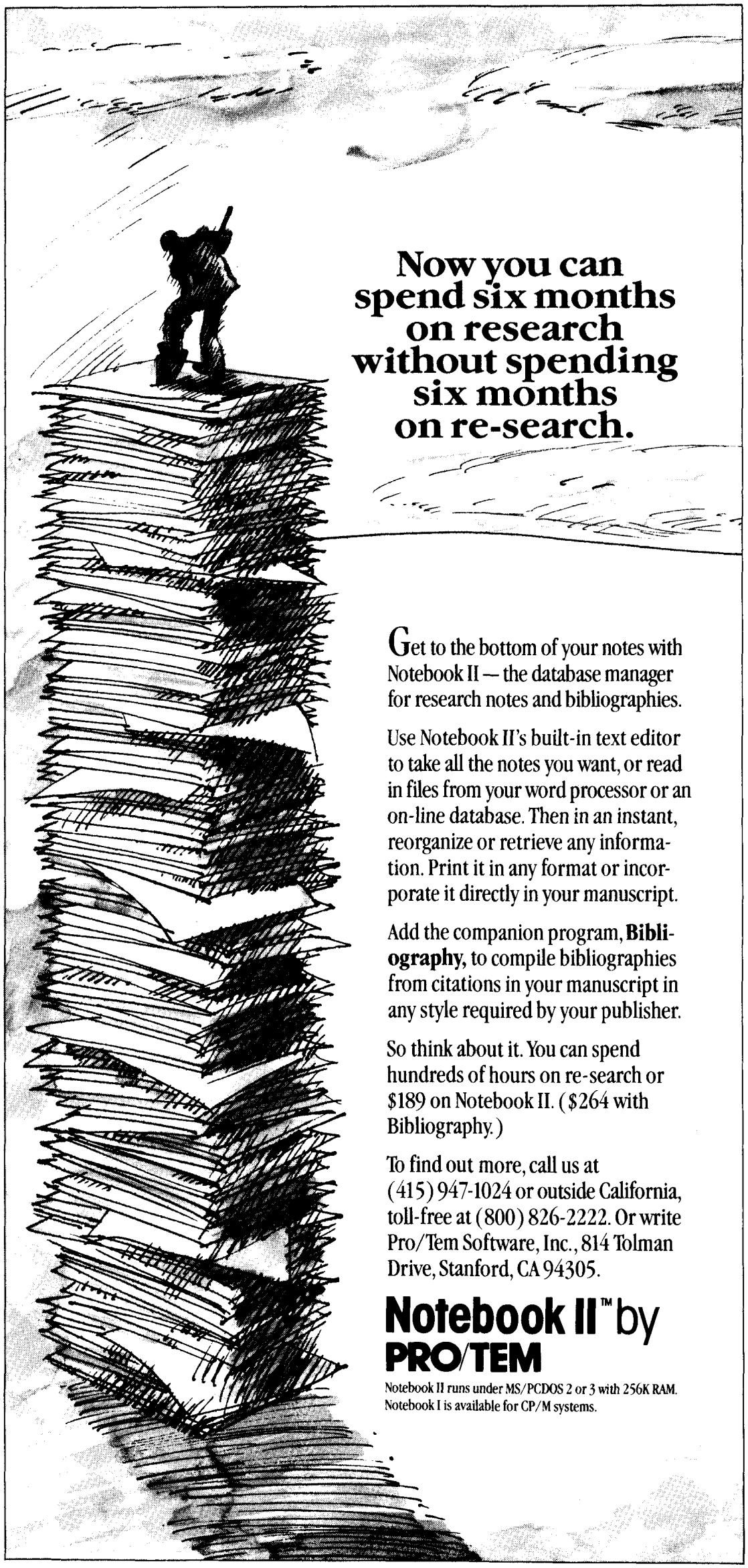
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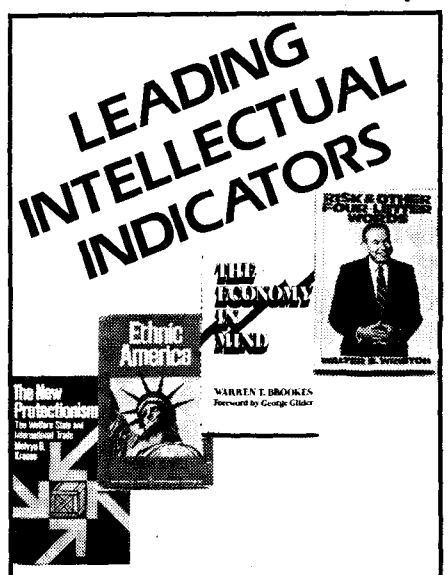

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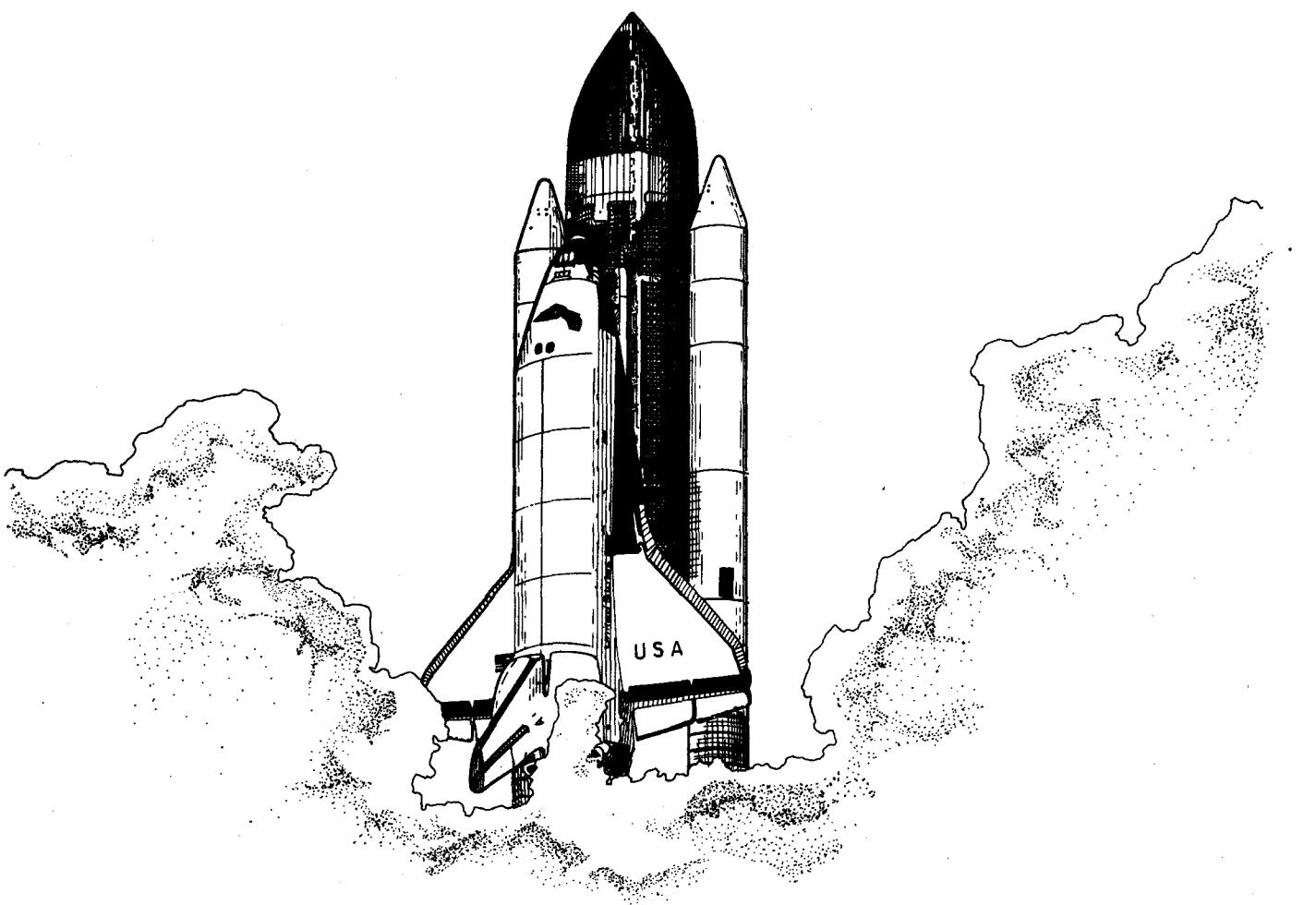

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Ronald Reagan, January 28, 1986

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•Mid-term elections attracted an amazing 37.3 percent of the electorate. It is a prodigious figure when one considers the many wholesome activities available to Americans in November. In Portage, Indiana, six young men armed themselves to the dentures, trained as a "Delta Force" in an abandoned missile site, and were about to storm a mental-health center to free a daft Hoosier siren when the cops spoiled the fun. In Shrewsbury, Vermont, as many as 4,000 voyeurs showed up daily to watch live sex between a nubile cow and a New Age moose. And in Memphis, Tennessee, unknown locals stole former Australian prime minister Malcolm Fraser's pants. Nonetheless, nearly 40 percent of the American electorate could find nothing better to do on a beautiful November day than to cast ballots for the array of boobs and boob-fetchers at large during the fall of 1986. For some the promise of America is empty, as will be explained in due course.

•In Massachusetts's Eighth District the citizenry went to such extremes as to replace retiring Speaker of the House O'Neill with an even more egregious imbecile, Joseph Kennedy II, a *reductio ad absurdum* of a Kennedy. Boy Joe's repertoire of bad habits and errancies includes all those of his most ill-behaved relatives and some unknown even to Kennedys. Moreover, Boy Joe can hardly speak English. During his campaign he spoke only in jingles and grunts, and now he is heading for Washington to join Uncle Ted in draining Scotch bottles and terrorizing waitresses.

•Former President Jimmy Carter turned up in Peshawar, Pakistan, where he was photographed speaking to what appeared to be a lunatic, telling him that President Ronald Reagan is insufficiently rigorous in his resistance to Russian Communism. There was a time when ex-Presidents traveling abroad did not speak ill of successors. Mr. Carter, however, often criticizes the President from foreign soil, for he has been very badly wounded by history's ingratitude. As the poet said, "time wounds all heals." In Missoula, Montana, townspeople who have grown fond of the reassuring sound of Mr. Roy Duncan's hiccups will have to make do with the sound of silence or perhaps buy themselves a frog pond. Mr. Duncan, a chronic hiccup sufferer, has gone and done himself in. In faraway Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, young Mr. Naresh Kumar Savita would have envied Mr. Duncan's efficiency had he not been comatose. Mr. Savita is recovering from his twenty-first attempt at suicide, after having leaped from a third-story window only to fall on a fat lady or into a gigantic wedding cake or onto some other unforeseen cushion. According to the United News of India, Mr. Savita has tried everything, including eating a lizard. Perhaps he could try jaywalking in New York City.

•That drug charge against a Fayetteville, West Virginia county commissioner who kept a laminated marijuana leaf displayed in his office was dismissed when the judge doubted that the defendant, Commissioner John Witt, could smoke the coated leaf. Washington, D.C. suffered a sudden VD scare when the Great Peace March arrived late in November, bringing several hundred vegetarians, nudists, frotteurs, whale fanciers, and a lone juggler, all glassy-eyed and bragging of their good deeds. A two-alarm fire was set off in a Lafayette, California crematory after a 500-pound corpse became too hot to handle. An unnamed Toronto philanthropist of the Bob Geldof variety captured the spirit of the age. He has raised $5,000 in pennies to feed the hungry, according to UPI, and now he intends to break the world record for sitting in a bathtub filled with more than 26 gallons of baked beans! Finally, Miss Geraldine Ferraro's automobile was stolen from her home in the Forest Hills section of Queens. Miss Ferraro reported the theft at 7:25 a.m., a surprisingly early hour for her to be awakening these days, as will be explained in due course.

•From Australia there comes welcome evidence that not all journalists are the moral exhibitionists we Yanks have come to expect. In Sydney the *Australian People* magazine again sponsored Australia's highly competitive "dwarf-throwing" season despite protests from opponents of the strenuous life. And according to the editor of *Australian People*, Mr. David Naylor, this season "dwarf-bowling" will be added to the competitions: "We're going to strap a skateboard to their stomachs," vowed the innovative Mr. Naylor, "and roller skates on their arms, and roll them down an expansive floor toward the skittles." Early in November the National Academy of Sciences decried Washington's response to AIDS as distressingly inadequate, and on November 20 Dr. Halfdan Mahler, head of the World Health Organization, sounded equally cheerless: "We're running scared," said Dr. Mahler, adding that he could "not imagine a worse health problem in this century."

•North Korea's strongman, Mr. Kim Il Sung, was reported dead and the Khmer Rouge's Mr. Pol Pot was reported sick. Mr. Kim survived. Violinist Arthur Grumiaux passed away in Brussels, and Mr. Anthony Cima, the 87-year-old San Diego bibliomaniac who after an earthquake in July was trapped for 12 hours under thousands of his own books, died. The quake had measured 5.3 on the Richter scale. It has been a foul season for Governor Cuomo. His rows with the press have reached new intensity, and on November 19 a New York jury convicted eight men of criminal behavior that sounds like nothing so much as the Mafia that the Governor insists is an illusion. In Athens the publisher of a Greek weekly of leftist inclination was found guilty of describing Resistance International, a Paris-based anti-Communist organization, as a "snake pit of super tramps"; two weeks later Mr. Ivan Boesky pled guilty to receiving illicit information and profiting thereby, as will be explained in due course.

•In Jersey City, a 53-year-old police sergeant about to be retired after 25 years of duty was shot dead by a naked man yelling "Mommy, Mommy." The assailant, Mr. William Mitchell, was another of the thousands of beneficiaries of that incomparable reformist movement that has made the incarceration of the insane nearly impossible. Moments after killing Sergeant Donald Carroll, Mr. Mitchell was put beyond the reformers' mercies by a fusillade of police fire. That Pakistani airliner that inexplicably crashed late in October near Karachi may have been the casualty of nearby marriage revels. *Dawn*, a leading Karachi gazette, reported that seven bridegrooms had been celebrating their marriages the night that the plane crashed, and apparently it is a Pakistani custom for men on their wedding nights to fire their guns into the heavens at anything that flies. When the ammunition is gone they go home, as will be explained in due course.

•Mr. William L. Wall, the executive director of the Amateur Basketball Association of America, asserted that he was "concerned and embarrassed" that Miss Kay Yow, designated the coach of our 1988 amazons' Olympic basketball team, had recently offended Soviet sensibilities by smuggling Bibles into Moscow during international competitions, and in Houston, Texas, Mr. John Parks committed suicide when it appeared that authorities were about to

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discover the whereabouts of his mother, who died over a year ago and has been seated in her living room ever since. She and her son used to watch the commentaries of Bill Moyers together.

•Mr. Vyacheslav M. Molotov, the eponym for one of the most famous cocktails in the world, died of natural causes. He was 96. Samantha Smith's name was applied to yet another Soviet property. Her name already appears on a species of nonlethal Soviet flower, a 12,000-foot mountain peak, and a babushka. Now it will appear on a minor planet somewhere near Jupiter. Soviet astronomer Miss Lyudmila Chernykh discovered the planet early in November and just up and named it for Miss Smith. Finally, the press is no longer clamoring for President Ronald Reagan to make an effort to free hostages held in Lebanon, as will be explained in due course. *—RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Count Me Out

In his "AIDS: A British View," which appears on page 29 of this issue, Christopher Monckton writes: "Every member of the population should be blood-tested every month to detect the presence of antibodies against [AIDS], and all those found to be infected with the virus, even if only carriers, should be isolated compulsorily, immediately, and permanently."

In reading this some of our more charitable readers might think they are being treated to a brilliant flash of Swiftian satire, or maybe a bit of outrageous leg-pulling from a budding Auberon Waugh. Alas, they would be wrong. Monckton was quite straight-faced in writing up his modest proposal, and the editors are quite serious in publishing it.

This grotesque but recently voguish hysteria is ludicrous on its face, or anyway it should seem so to someone who prizes the principles on which this magazine is supposed to be based—limited government, prudence, and individual responsibility, to name a few. It is simply the latest version of the totalitarian flim-flam that is forever drawing believers from the ranks of the weak-minded and the perpetually alarmed. Why the editors have seen fit to open their pages to it remains a deep mystery; but they have done so, and therein lies an insult and an embarrassment to all associated with *The American Spectator.*

—Andrew Ferguson
Assistant Managing Editor

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski replies:

So far as I can make out, Andy Ferguson is greatly upset by the coldheartedness displayed by Christopher Monckton in his search for a solution to the AIDS crisis. However, in fairness to Mr. Monckton (and to our readers), it will not do to quote him out of context. Elsewhere in the piece Mr. Monckton also writes that "it is unlikely that a society which has been habituated to freedom since its foundation would yet be willing to accept the alternative to widespread death which isolation would offer." In other words, he is fully aware that a proposal as radical as his is essentially unthinkable. The reason for his concern is what he regards as the nature of AIDS: a disease that continues to spread at a frightening rate and for which a cure is neither in sight nor likely. If Mr. Ferguson disagrees with Mr. Monckton on the science of AIDS, he should let us know. Until then, he will not have convinced us that Mr. Monckton's alarming proposal is nothing more than alarmism.

Venerable Harvard

This letter is about an article by P. J. O'Rourke in the November issue ("Crimson Cerebrations"). It calls for a "second opinion." O'Rourke writes in a juvenile, mocking fashion and exhibits no understanding either of the general significance of the 350th Harvard Anniversary celebration or of the individual seminars and programs. I was there as one of the representatives of the Class of 1935 and was most thoroughly impressed and pleased with the entire celebration. The calibre of participant and attendee and the breadth and depth of the sessions were extraordinary.

Perhaps I should write off O'Rourke as being a confirmed cynic as well as possessing an inferiority complex (and rightly so). I do appreciate he enjoys the right of free speech and your magazine certainly exemplifies that principle.

He evinces childish traits in commenting on the voices and accents of a number of people, and that seems pretty petty to me. He takes a cheap shot at a great university and at fabulous programming.

I hope his children (if he has any) enjoy a better education, a higher appreciation of the finer things in life, possess a decent sense of humor, and are more understanding of the values of a venerable institution. Finally, Secretary of State Shultz's speech was a gem. O'Rourke needs some "attitude readjustment pills." He seems to be a very unhappy and jaded individual, sad to say.

May *The American Spectator* progress and flourish!

—Sumner Rodman
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

Barnes Askew

In your September issue, Fred Barnes [in "Conservatives and the Democratic 10"] writes that, in the 1984 presidential campaign, "Every Democratic presidential candidate took himself out of contention for the conservative vote by a single act, criticizing the invasion of Grenada by American troops."

He adds about John Glenn, Fritz Hollings, and Reubin Askew that "without complaint, these three knuckled under on Grenada in hopes of placating the liberal, isolationist wing of the party that dominates the presidential primaries and caucuses."

Mr. Barnes owes Mr. Askew an apology.

Reubin Askew spoke out immediately, repeatedly, and vigorously in support of President Reagan's actions in Grenada. In fact, he was *roundly booed* for doing so at the state convention of the New Hampshire Democratic Party shortly after the rescue mission occurred.

Anyone in attendance at that convention, or any journalist who paid any attention to Askew's campaign, will confirm this. Unfortunately, Mr. Barnes, for all his current longing for a mainstream Democratic candidate, never even took the time in the last campaign to meet with Askew, a mainstream Democrat who has been widely hailed as one of the finest of recent American governors. Over a period of more than two years, Barnes repeatedly rebuffed letters and telephone calls in which Askew's staff tried to arrange a meeting between the two men. Little wonder that Barnes cannot recall Askew's positions on the issues.

For the record, far from coddling the "liberal, isolationist wing" of the Democratic Party, Askew challenged the left again and again—with his opposition to the nuclear freeze, with his opposition to abortion, with his support for merit pay for teachers, with his support for limits on middle-class entitlements spending, with his support for capital punishment, with his support for right-to-work laws and free trade, and so on.

It may be that Askew challenged too many entrenched party interest groups on too many issues. It may be that the candidate and his campaign were not as slick or as shrewd as they needed to be to win the nomination. Certainly the results in Iowa and New Hampshire support such an argument. But what if Barnes and other prominent journalists had given Askew the attention and the coverage that his record and his views deserved? Would the results have differed then?

Mr. Barnes seems already to have anointed a candidate for 1988—Senator Bradley (interestingly enough, Askew's choice for the vice presidency had he won the nomination). Nevertheless, I urge Barnes this time to meet with and give equal treatment to all the candidates. If he can't find the time in his busy schedule to do that, then I urge him, at the least, to be accurate in his reporting.

—James L. Bacchus
Formerly, Press Secretary
Askew for President
Orlando, Florida

Fred Barnes replies:

I should have known I'd have to pay sooner or later for my sins in covering the 1984 Democratic presidential race. There were eight candidates, and I was one reporter for the *Baltimore Sun.* As you might expect, several candidates got short shrift from me, and poor Reubin Askew was one of them. Think of the consequence my lack of coverage had on the race; I tilted it away from Askew and toward the liberal isolationists.

Please excuse my sarcasm. Actually, Bacchus has a good point. The press, including me, dwells on the front-runners and largely ignores the rest of the field. This is bound to have some impact on the race. Still, candidates the press ignores sometimes surge anyway. Then, surprised reporters adjust instantly, treat them as front-runners, and ignore the fallen former front-runners. All this is a never-ending cycle. Brace yourself. It's coming again in 1988.

What about Askew and Grenada? I recalled that Askew was partially critical of Reagan's performance on Grenada, while endorsing the decision to invade. Bacchus assures me I am wrong, that Askew's support for the policy was unqualified. As a result, I do indeed offer Askew an apology for suggesting otherwise.

(continued on page 48)

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EDITORIALS

REAGAN IS NOT REAGAN

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

In America to be corrupted by bad impulses is relatively commonplace. To be corrupted by good impulses is apparently presidential. Jimmy Carter was brought low by an unscotchable impulse to do good when self-restraint would have been preferable and even morally unobjectionable. Now Ronald Reagan, swelled by his own good intentions, has suffered the same fate.

Jimmy Carter's libido for pious deeds was promiscuous. He would commit them anywhere, which explains the calamities that befell him practically everywhere. Only in his recent dealings with the Soviet Union and Iran has Ronald Reagan abandoned himself to goodness, and so it is that only now has his corruption set in. Blinded by a good impulse he has behaved arrogantly, deviously, and as the classic appeaser.

Some will consider it ironic that this President has come a cropper over a longing to reunite innocent victims of barbarism with their families. It seems so blameless. Yet it conduced him toward an arrogant disregard for the truth reminiscent of Lyndon Johnson and toward an ineptitude matched only by Jimmy Carter.

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

The greater irony is that it should be the religious paradise of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini that corrupted the foreign policy behavior of this conservative President. Jimmy Carter's troubles with Khomeini's madhouse were the proximate cause of Reagan's election, and now Reagan's troubles there have rendered him at one with the hapless Jimmy. Are the powers and the principalities of the heavens at work here? Doubtless a mullah or two would believe it, but I lay the present presidential ineptitude, disingenuousness, and appeasement to Reagan's artless trust in the goodness of a good impulse. American Presidents need to learn that good deeds are not enough, and good intentions never preempt prudence.

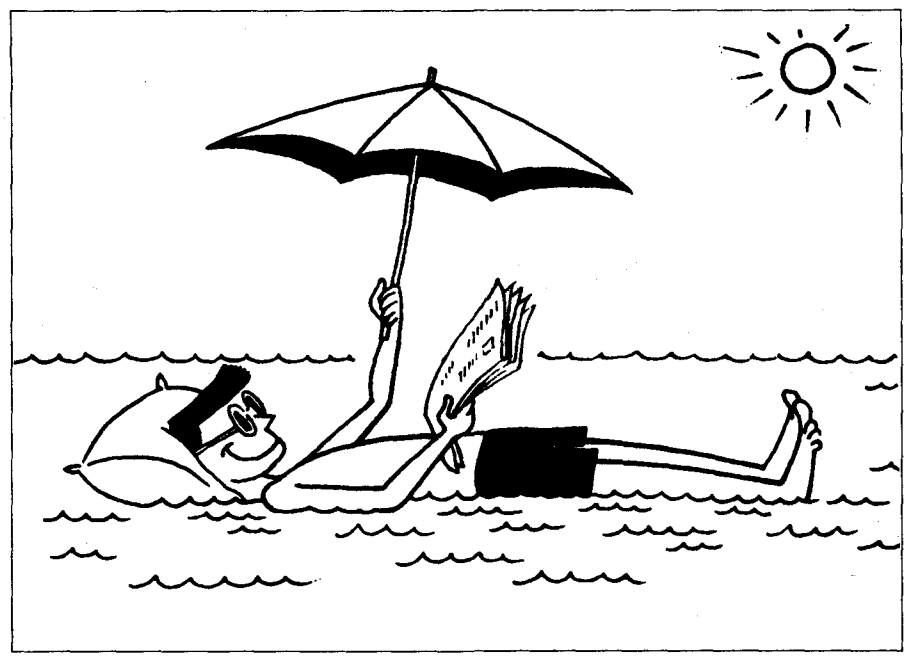
Pursuing renewed diplomatic relations with post-Khomeini Iran is irreproachable, but the course followed by the Reagan White House was dreamy to the point of being preposterous and so perilous as to assure our failure and embarrassment.

This conservative Administration's foreign policy has been based on assessing the world as it is rather than as some ideologue dreams it to be. Thus, the President's secret emissaries should have borne in mind that the United States is not obliged to give Iran a sign of good faith, not through arms shipments nor kisses blown from atop the Washington Monument. Iran has been the aggressor against us. Its friends and perhaps its agents hold our citizens and under conditions that are as inhumane as they are unjust. Furthermore, Iran, owing to its own excesses, is about to collapse. It needs our arms and our good will. Washington's policy toward terrorists and its embargo of arms shipments to a nation whose piratical behavior places it beyond the conventions of civilized nations have been sound. Aspiring Iranian leaders owe us a sign of good faith, such as the freeing of *all* Western hostages.

The President's emissaries might also have borne in mind that Iran is now a vast asylum of enraged factions, frequently illiterate. To expose oneself to the skittish mercies of any side was the path to certain betrayal. Yet these emissaries took that path. Now the President of the United States again looks pathetic before the world and cheap.

In the end, as his multitudinous calamities weighed down on him, Jimmy Carter simply denied that the world had meaning. "There is nothing we can do about it," he and his assistant presidents would intone. President Reagan is more specific. He now denies that certain words have meaning. A shipment of weapons is not a shipment of weapons and a breach of our own arms embargo is not a breach of our own embargo. A hostage exchange is not a hostage exchange. This sort of dissembling has been going on since the Daniloff exchange was not an exchange and the Reykjavik summit was not a summit and our most authoritative source on that meeting became the eminent Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev.

This travesty has now gone too far. There is insufficient strategic discipline in the White House and insufficient respect for reality. The President should bring strategic thinking and principle back and rid himself of those sycophants who acquiesce when he follows sentimental impulse rather than principle.



VIOLENCE IN THE SHEETS

As normalcy continues to refresh the land, leaving the vast majority of Americans free to live lives exempt from the gruesome melodramas that our progressives have imposed on us through the years, it becomes apparent that these progressives have a problem. They must find an outlet for their moral passions that is neither injurious to them nor to the public as a whole. They must occupy themselves in wholesome ways, avoiding desperate antics that nowadays could land them in a mental asylum or in some repressive house of detention even drearier than the great state universities that now rise up where once only harmless cow fields stood, or virgin forests. Is the socialization of the progressive, or of the liberal, as some are still called, feasible? What noble endeavor will absorb his prodigious energies?

I am happy to report that in the Age of Reagan Normalcy citizens of progressive disposition have found activities that are only minimally harmful. But first fairness counsels that I explain how the noble deeds of the morally mobilized have created the present contentment with normalcy.

Despite thin boasts of personal saintliness the progressives, who have set much of the national agenda since the early 1960s, are a very violent bunch. To their credit, ideologues of the far left have been quick to note the fierceness of such progressive Americans as, say, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., and that is why it has been so easy for them to spin yarns about the misdeeds that supposedly emanate from American circles of power. Doubtless, in the privacy of their consciences, the Republic's Professor Schlesingers do indeed recognize their capacity for violence, which explains why they fre-

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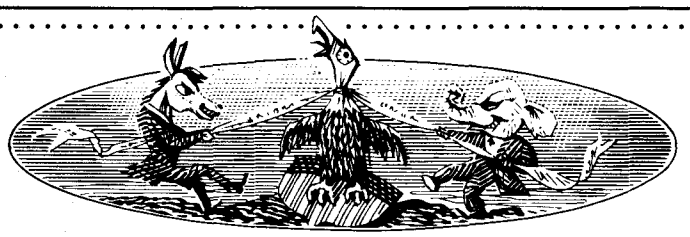
quently find left-wing theories of American imperialism and genocide so plausible. For nearly three decades they have been imperiously summoning us to War on Communism, War on poverty, War on illiteracy. Jimmy Carter, if I understood him correctly, summoned us to War on superfluous lightbulbs; and I hope it is only the rhetorical residue of those years of bellicosity that provoked our genial President to declare war on drugs.

Let us face the music: our elites are unnecessarily warlike. Yet one element that separates the present Age of Normalcy from the 1960s and 1970s is the peacefulness of ordinary Americans. They have grown wary of these repeated summons to arms. The more astute among them believe that all these social engineering campaigns were quite futile and unnecessarily expensive. The rest look at the federal deficit, anxiously recall double-digit inflation, and want no part in further wars to eliminate some perceived social problem.

This is undoubtedly a sensible conclusion. Perhaps the war on poverty brought relief to an occasional American down on his luck, but the size of our poverty class had been diminishing for decades and the material condition of the poor had been improving *pari passu* with the condition of all Americans. Today the condition of the very poor, particularly in our cities, is appalling, with social pathologies such as crime and family dissolution making poverty more wretched than before the war on poverty commenced. Social scientists have shown beyond doubt that a subclass of poor Americans is now finding it impossible to break out of poverty. Whether most Americans recognize this they know that the progressives' wars cost a bundle and were paid for with catastrophic taxation and inflation. They want peace and steady economic growth.

So how are our progressives going to redirect their moral passions? I have researched this question fully and can now report that they have mobilized their energies behind an extensive campaign against the bespectacled person of George F. Will, television's conservative. Admittedly this is not like the great days when the morally superior warred against whole classes of fat cats, but the campaign is also being waged against any other commentators who might make bold to challenge progressive orthodoxy, particularly those referred to as neoconservatives. So now Will has had to suffer long assaults on his intellect and his income from progressives at the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal, Village Voice,* the *New York Review of Books*, the *New Republic*, and the learned "Doonesbury" comic strip. Their complaints are not very intelligent but the old violence remains. Diversity of opinion is not a progressive cause, and one George F. Will in medialand is one too many. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



MEALY MOUTHS

by Tom Bethell

I was going to say something about the Administration's arms-for-hostages trading, but by the time this comes out, a month from now, everything will no doubt look very different. Which is why we're hoping your Editor-in-Chief will perform another prodigy, wave a magic wand, and turn this into a weekly magazine. Then we will be able to write about Current Events rather than Timeless Topics. (This piece is threatening to turn Timeless at any moment with a discussion of arms control, so get ready to prop your eyelids open.)

Incidentally, your Washington Correspondent has written so little about Washington lately that I gather your Editor-in-Chief sent the truant officer after me. But I gave him the slip in my recent globe-trotting and now I have taken refuge at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, where I will be a "media fellow" for several months. Later I may divulge some secrets about this mysterious, powerful, influential "hotbed" of reaction and Reaganism, but for the moment I will confine myself to the observation that Stanford University is a nice place to visit, the campus is like a country club, and the sun shines every day.

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

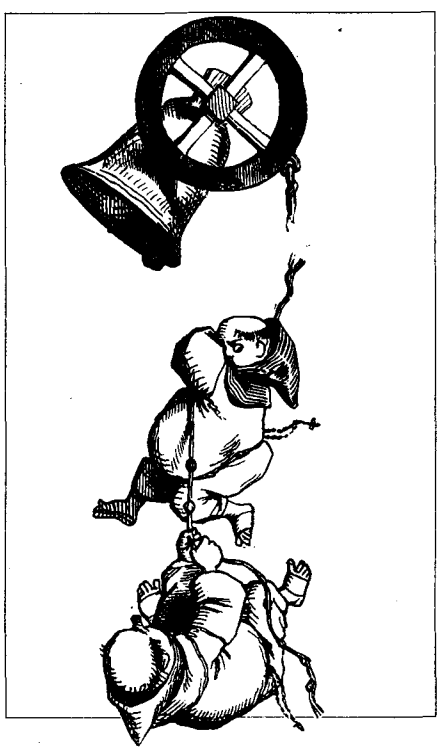
As for poor old Ronald Reagan and the Iranian deal, his daughter Maureen put her finger on it some time ago when she said the media had it all wrong about her dad—he was really rather a soft-hearted fellow, never could say no, wouldn't hurt a fly, and his children always could get whatever they wanted out of him. Nevertheless, we're forever told that he is this hardline, uncompassionate, hawkish, Hooverish, right-wing, and so on ruler. I think in order to dispel this false image Reagan has gone overboard trying to show what a compassionate man he is—thereby demonstrating his vulnerability to bullying and giving the Democrats a golden opportunity to move to his right: probably the only way they can be elected in 1988.

I have said it before and I will say it again: Reagan's Achilles' heel as President has always been his soft heart. No heel he! More than anything it is his penchant for compassion that has exposed his presidency to peril. Reagan has many fine qualities. His lack of interest in the exercise of power is in itself ambiguous: personally admirable and yet professionally dangerous. (I think, for example, he let Michael Deaver put him in this Iranian mess by okaying the promotion of the unqualified Robert McFarlane to the NSC post.) But an unflinching will of steel is not among Reagan's presidential qualities. Are weeping hostage families to visit him in the Oval Office, seeking his intercession on behalf of their loved ones? Well, bring them in. Did someone say he should *do* something? By golly, here was the opportunity to show that he wasn't the hard-hearted Ray-Gun so mendaciously advertised by the Leftist International.

But in showing himself to be so easily distressed by what his enemies say about him, Reagan has shown weakness, I fear. It seems to bother him immensely that there are in this world people who don't like him and who willfully misconstrue his motives. This distress may be private virtue, but it is public vice.

Why, a couple of years back, did the Israeli government swap literally hundreds of Palestinians, terrorists among them, for just three Israeli soldiers? Because senior Israeli officials made the mistake of meeting with and getting to know the families of the three soldiers. Ron and Nancy should turn off the television set in the White House because there too you get to know the families, and it seems that Reagan just can't say no to a tearful plea.

Conservatives have been reluctant to point all this out because for the most part they are satisfied with small favors. "Their man" is in the White House—don't rock the boat by criticizing him too much. Didn't he give a tough-sounding speech last month? Can't fault that. Give the man a break! Besides, conservatives, too, have preferred to think of Reagan as a hardliner. So there has been this tacit agreement all round not to point out



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that the strongman has no epaulets.

Meanwhile, the press is going to have a lot of fun criticizing Reagan for doing what they in fact wanted him to do—namely, demonstrate more compassion. It was interesting to see Lesley Stahl on CBS-TV expressing a feigned dismay at Reagan for saying, first, that he would break the SALT II limits, then vacillating on the promise, for all the world as though she were the soulmate of Richard Perle, hardliner-in-residence at the Pentagon. Stahl, of course, wanted to illustrate the point that Reagan's "foreign policy is in disarray." (And in a way it is, too, but only because Reagan has surrounded himself with advisers who spend the day worrying about the evening news.)

Alexander Cockburn asked in the *Wall Street Journal* if the news media "lapdogs will at last become watchdogs." Mostly, of course, Reagan has responded to media hectoring by adopting a strategy of capitulation. In response, sensible watchdogs who know their Pavlov will jump up in his lap and offer a few rewarding licks before jumping off to growl anew.

Okay, fellas . . . We should renew the process, did someone say? Go back to Geneva? Say hello to this Gorbachev? (Hard to keep them all straight.) As we used to say in Hollywood when I was a labor negotiator . . . How's that again, listen more to George Shultz, ignore the right-wing ideologues, do something about this terrible arms buildup, a peril to our children and to all mankind? Guys, guys, now now Sam, stop shouting okay? Uh, well, how was it again? Here we go then, no no no, you've got me all wrong (no more nukes, did the man say?). Uh . . . Hello, is that Mr. Gorbachev? They say we should get together and have a friendly chat . . . Iceland it is, then. You're on for next week.

In view of the Reykjavik outcome, perhaps we should give Reagan credit for a certain Machiavellian cunning, nonetheless. Certainly this can be imputed to one or two of his better-known arms-control advisers. Reagan took the "no nukes" slogan and put it right on the table for Gorbachev to gobble. With what effect? We heard immediately from Mrs. Thatcher and our normally timid allies: Hey, wait a minute, they said, we like those nukes because if you take them away then maybe we're going to have to increase our defense budgets!

By embracing the ostensible goal of the arms controllers, Reagan showed it to be a goal very few people want to reach. Even Paul Warnke came out against it! (Jimmy Carter's arms control director, Warnke today takes time out to advise Gov. Mario Cuomo on foreign policy.) Arms control is not really meant to reduce arms. How many arms controllers blew the whistle on Reagan for saying, as he did several times before Reykjavik, that it was his arms buildup that had brought the Russians to the table? None. Yet think about it. It's like saying you have put on ten pounds so now you can safely go on a diet. No one commented on the self-defeating nature of such a strategy. (Mary McGrory of the *Washington Post* came closest to doing so, using the same "meal" metaphor. "As a House member, Sen. Albert Gore Jr. [D-Tenn] helped the President get the MX, on the grounds that if Reagan got a good last meal of strategic missiles, he would head for the negotiating table.")

Of course, these last meals always turn out to be *extra* meals because the "diet" of arms control never materializes. Thus the arms control process is like a never-ending Mardi Gras in preparation for a Lenten regime of reductions that never arrives. Beautiful for the Pentagon, right? Now perhaps we can begin to understand why, as Secretary of the Navy John Lehman said a month or so ago, the world's leading advocates of arms control are the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And, Lehman

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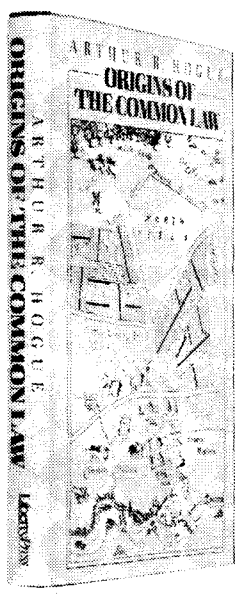

ORIGINS OF THE COMMON LAW

By Arthur R. Hogue

First published in 1966 by Indiana University Press, Arthur R. Hogue's *Origins of the Common Law* looks at the deep medieval roots of our legal system during the early formative period of the common law. Between 1154 and 1307, from the reign of Henry II to that of Edward I, common law experienced a spectacular growth as a legal system enforced in the English Royal Courts. Paraphrasing Professor Hogue: in the form of writs, judicial decisions, treatises, royal ordinances, and parliamentary statutes, the common law, in large part the definition of established customs, emerged into explicit written form and formal procedure to order better such ordinary relationships among Englishmen as those between landlord and tenant, merchant and money lender, and buyer and seller.

In his final chapter, "From Medieval Law to Modern Law," Hogue concludes, "The rule of law, the development of law by means of judicial precedents, the use of the jury to determine the material facts of a case, and the definition of numerous causes of action—these form the principal and valuable legacy of the medieval law to the modern law." And one might add, to the growth of the concept of liberty as well.

This thoughtful, lucid account is a work of history, not a technical legal treatise, and should be of interest to the general reader and the specialist alike.

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added, this is just as true in the Reagan Administration as it was in the Carter Administration.

The case that an endless arms control process creates an arms buildup is a fascinating one, and irrefutable, I believe. The Soviet intermediate range SS-20 missile aimed at Western Europe was a product of arms control (designed to circumvent SALT I limits on strategic, or long-range, missiles). The U.S. responded by placing Pershing II and cruise missiles in Western Europe because (according to Zbigniew Brzezinski): "I was persuaded reluctantly that we needed [them] to obtain European support for SALT [II]," then a candidate for Senate ratification. Brzezinski added that he was "personally never persuaded that we needed [the new weapons] for military reasons." Nor was Richard Perle, hardliner-in-residence. (The foregoing extracted from Strobe Talbott's book, *Deadly Gambits*.)

Beautiful! The arms control process thereby created an entirely new deployment of nuclear arms on both sides in Western Europe. The question is, why haven't the liberals seen through this? Why do they continue to support a "process" which yields such a perverse outcome? Partly they haven't really thought it through, I suspect. In a conversation last summer with the genial Les Aspin, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, I used the Never-Ending Mardi Gras metaphor, and he reacted as though it were a novel view of arms control. But of course there is something else—another reason why the liberals persist in pinning their hopes on arms control.

It is in reality intended as a "process" whereby the U.S. and the Soviet Union get together and, above all else, *agree*: agree to marginal adjustments and small changes, the effect of which is not to change the military balance but to steer Soviet policy (sometimes called Soviet "behavior") into more "moderate" directions, and simultaneously to subject U.S. military procurement to Soviet consent. It encourages the State Department in its persistent delusion that it can moderate not only U.S. foreign policy but also Soviet foreign policy.

Furthermore, arms control is intended to freeze the technological status quo. And herein lies its danger. In the nineteenth-century transition from sail to steam nostalgic admirals would have found in arms control a useful ally—convenient for keeping their full-rigged men-o'-war in the fleet and keeping the despised dreadnoughts out. In the twentieth century the 1972 ABM treaty threatens to obstruct an even more momentous transition from offensive missiles to missile defenses. The "Luddite" nature of arms control is rarely understood, although Brzezinski, oddly (for he is a supporter of strategic defense), remarked on "This Week With David Brinkley" (October 12) that "any really good [arms control] agreement has to have . . . genuinely effective impediments to modernization."

It's not hard to see why yesteryear's strategists with names like McNamara and Bundy are eager to preserve the strategic balance of the previous generation. Likewise, the Joint Chiefs find a natural ally in the ABM treaty. They are not at all enthusiastic about strategic defense. Unfortunately, however, President Reagan listens to the Joint Chiefs, believing them to be reliable advocates of a strong defense, without realizing that for them "strong" means "old."

I am told by a fellow fellow at Hoover that Sen. Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming, one of the very few men in Congress who understands the dangers of arms control, recently urged Reagan to proceed with the deployment of Strategic Defense, thereby catching up with the Soviets. Reagan told Wallop that the Joint Chiefs were opposed to the idea. □

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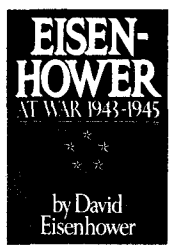

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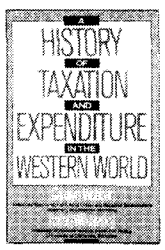

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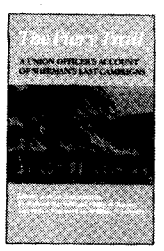

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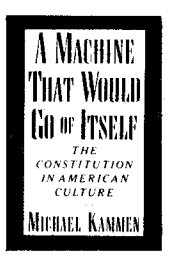

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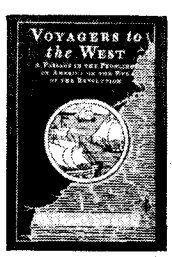

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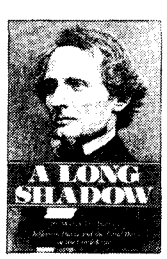

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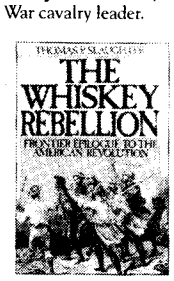

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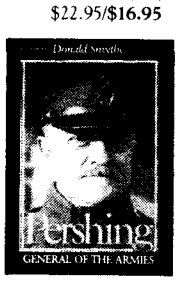

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Tim W. Ferguson

WHAT NEXT FOR THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT?

If the numbers aren't there, you'd better plot a new strategy.

Okay, the election wasn't the "rebuke" of Ronald Reagan that the predictable pack jumped to calling it. But the latest mixed-up mid-term was no ratification, either. It supports the view that the "Reagan Revolution" is not yet one as far as political attitudes—and certainly practices—in the country are concerned. And it argues for using what sentiment shifts *have* occurred as leverage in forming alliances with nonconservatives to achieve short-run policy gains while a longer-term effort to reeducate the electorate continues.

The Democrats wouldn't come out and fight this time, it was said, but they sure did win. Though the raw vote totals for the Senate weren't so discouraging (a few pundits noticed that the Republicans got a higher overall percentage in 1986 than in 1980, or 1982) the reality of the results could be worse than it first seemed. Worse, that is, if you agree that the GOP is, for all the deviations, a reasonable proxy for resistance to the leviathan state.

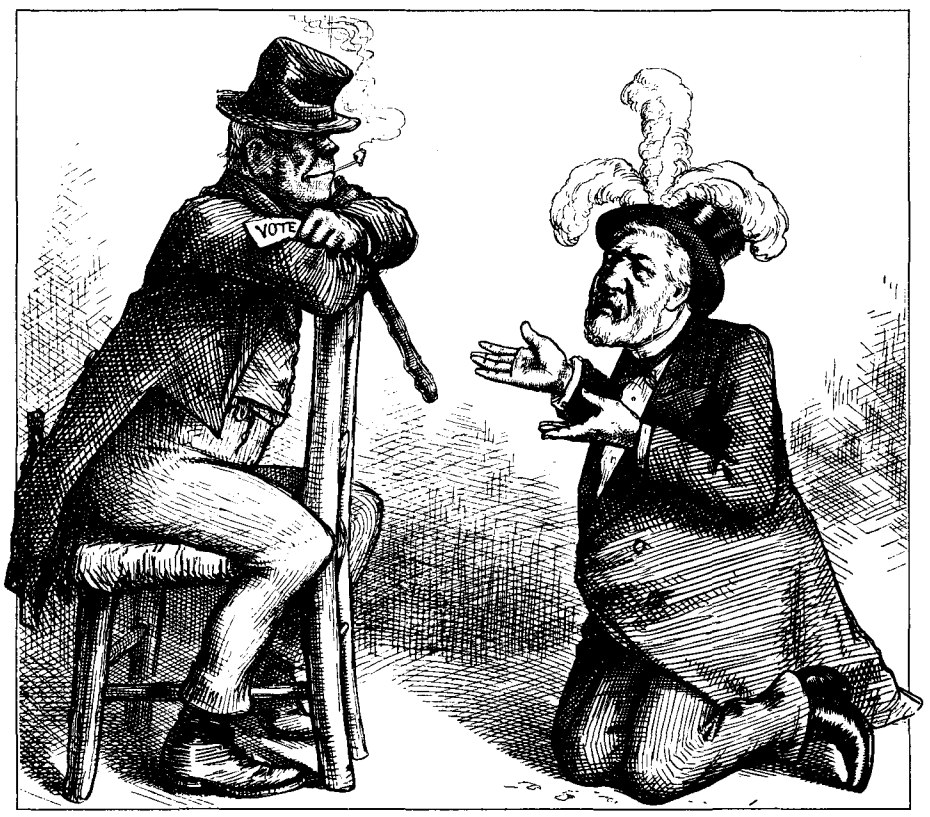
Republicans suffered in the Senate outcomes irrespective for the most part of whether they ran as Reaganites or not. Some of the departed will not be missed, but few conservatives will enjoy the crop that got in. And the damage won't be limited to two years. Just how does the GOP figure on winning back the chamber in 1988? Based on 1982 returns, more Republicans are vulnerable than Democrats next time, as well. Of the Democrats up, only Lautenberg of New Jersey, Melcher of Montana, and Bingaman of New Mexico got less than 57 percent of the vote in 1982. Twice as many Republicans squeaked by. Even if you give a retiring John Stennis's seat to Trent Lott—no sure thing—it would take a GOP tidal wave to regain Senate control in 1988. By 1990, the task still looks daunting.

Tim W. Ferguson is editorial features editor of the Wall Street Journal.

What does minority status mean? We've heard the talk about setting the agenda and controlling the clock. Less has been said about the internal purse strings. Applications for staff positions (the majority gets a lot more) have been flooding the Senate personnel office from the Democratic diaspora. And those people, once hired, aren't just going to collect paychecks. For the most part, they'll be working 12 hours a day on expanding the government.

How will they do it? By controlling the committees. But why worry, if many of them will be run by moderate Democrats? Because it is hardly reassuring to think of Fritz Hollings reregulating commerce or William Proxmire doing the same to financial services. And as former Republican operative Richard Bond has pointed out, senior Senate Democrats have been moving left in their voting during the 1980s. Plus, consider the subcommittees, which, while less important than their equivalents in the House, can make life uneasy for an administrator trying to undo his bureaucracy. Consider trying to reshape foreign aid and answering to Senator Inouye instead of Senator Kasten. Or HUD, and reporting to Senator Riegle instead of Senator Hecht. You're a hawk, nettled by Senator Sasser's objections to building military bases in Central America to fight the Sandinistas? He's in line to run that Appropriations subcommittee now. Energy regulation? Count on seeing Senator Metzenbaum's friendly face. That's all before you get to the branches of Judiciary and Foreign Relations.

So, the Senate isn't a happy prospect. But in the House, we find an unusually small loss for the President's party in an off-year. Good news? Yes, but primarily for incumbents, who are harder and harder to beat (for many reasons, including the demise of straight-ticket voting). Only one sitting Democrat lost in 1986. And the numbers over time are disheartening. Since 1978, when what has been called a revolution really began, Republicans have gained fewer than 20 seats net. Consider the period 1930-1938, arguably a comparable one in what we'd consider "FDR's revolution": the Democrats, despite the pasting they took in the "court-packing" mid-term election, were up 46 seats, solidifying a hold they've not really relinquished since. A closer parallel is the Republican performance between 1918 and 1926, when there was zero net change in the House makeup. Indeed, it's getting to be a cliché, but the 1920s are an eerie model of the U.S. in the eighties. The Harding-Coolidge-Mellon times were many things, but they weren't a political epoch. Can more be said of the Reagan "realignment"?



That brings us to redistricting. The Republicans would be able to dislodge many of those House Democrats and possibly gain parity in the Congress—though nothing approaching a "revolutionary" majority—if it weren't for gerrymandering. The opportunity to correct this inequity will follow the 1990 Census. Will anything happen?

The GOP is excited about its new governorships. It claims the chief executive (but sometimes few other administrative posts) in nearly half the states. If it can hold its own or improve on this in four years, the House makeup could be altered—*except* that the state legislatures have a lot to say about who gets redistricted how. Moreover, their memberships are the farm clubs for solid congressional candidates to win those new seats. This is the most depressing Republican problem of all. Despite a concerted push in this area by the GOP machinery, Republicans in 1986 actually lost ground in the legislatures. The GOP's failure here is fundamental to its perpetual role as underdog.

Interestingly enough, the New Deal coalition that brought lasting change

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to Congress was not at the root of Democratic strength in the legislatures. Traditional Republican statehouses, and these included most of the big ones, bent quite a bit during the 1930s but returned to form by 1946 or 1952. The lasting damage to the GOP began shortly after that: quiet destruction during the Eisenhower years, ravaging in the LBJ landslide, and ultimately devastation post-Watergate. In one large state after another, the party has never recovered. An optimist would say this overlooks the movement of Republican might to the Sunbelt states, but in terms of congressional redistricting this is not so helpful. The GOP holds up to a third of the seats in Southern legislatures where it formerly had next to none, but that number is barely increasing now and not enough to tip the scales. In the growth belt, Arizona and Utah clearly have turned, but that's about it.

Why is the Republican party, having lost its place in mainstream American politics, slow in regaining it? The politics of demography have something to do with it. A higher percentage of voters are members of minority groups that have traditionally voted Democratic. More female voters are unmarried, constituting a subdivision of the electorate particularly hostile to conservatives. Older voters are living longer and growing ever more attached to Social Security, which in turn is now used to batter Republicans at each election.

Even within the middle-aged, white suburbs outside the Deep South, however, the greening of America is still in progress and the drain of Republican support steady if sluggish. How is this possible in the face of a renewed enthusiasm for entrepreneurial business of the sort once identified with the GOP of Main Street? Part of it is the business that no longer exists in a harshly competitive world; this affects both shopkeepers and blue-collar workers who might have flirted with political realignment. At the same time, the affluence enjoyed by those who've fared well in the transitionary economy has created for them "quality-of-life" issues that Democrats exploit: opposition to growth and to perceived health and safety threats, for example. Much as some on the right would deny it, Vietnam remains indelibly etched on the minds of Americans over age 35, in a way that militates against the use of military force *at appreciable cost*. Perhaps this explains the "yellow-ribbon" foreign policy evident on the streets.

Why did the Silent Majority go soft around the edges? The influences have been spiritual and secular. The Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant churches have veered left and, whatever their attendance falloff, the political pull has been felt on Nicaragua and the nuclear freeze. Coincidentally, the public schools have become a subtle culture for—what shall we call it, an NEA agenda?—even as they were scrubbed of religion. (Some see in the Reagan rallies and the popularity of a few films some sure signs that America's young have rebuffed the liberalism of their teachers, just as evangelicals have spurned the National Council of Churches and the bishops. Opinion surveys do not altogether support this; more confidently, it can be said that conservative students aren't as intimidated from expressing their views today as they were in the sixties and seventies.) And, yes, there is The Media. For nearly a generation, the entertainment side has been archly liberal-left, the news organs more moderately so.

Despite a concentrated push by the GOP machinery, Republicans in 1986 actually lost ground in the state legislatures. The GOP's failure here is fundamental to its perpetual role as underdog.

Still, among the educated there is hope. Not within memory has the intellectual climate for contesting redistributionists been as strong. In the better colleges, libertarians are joining faculties (but like their contemporaries, rarely getting tenure). Intellectual publications challenging the status quo spring up all over; foundation money is plentiful. It isn't unfair to say that the right is capturing this precinct of the New Class. But the vanguard is way ahead of the troops. Nowhere is this more true than among Jews. From their number has come the core of the ascendant intelligentsia, yet the larger Jewish electorate unswervingly supports liberal Democrats.

In time, gains could be had in the fundamental struggle for a liberty-oriented, as opposed to a security-oriented, society. But unless the political slippage is checked, unless the opponents of statism get off the one-step-forward-two-steps-back march, the ground may be scorched as we wait a full generation for the seeds now planted to flower. Republicans have tried the paid consultants, and passed the bend on the Laffer Curve for political spending. How about a different approach? Donald Regan says he is looking for some coalitions for the next two years. These may not be what he has in mind, but I suggest the following:

•Practice realpolitik with the environmentalists. They've shown they will rarely be beaten on a cutting issue, even one of considerable economic cost, because their support is broad and deep. Yet within their movement is an emergent wing willing to be rational, if still often elitist. This group realizes that societies without economic growth aren't usually kind to their surroundings. Republicans on the right could learn to differentiate among the greenies, and cut some deals with the better half.

•With most of the electorate, turn the heat on the trial lawyers. We're finding out they're vulnerable and worthy political targets. Ditto their friends on the Judiciary Committee, maybe. Note, in this judicial vein, that California just expelled its last vestiges of the Gov. Moonbeam legacy.

•Encourage and expand upon efforts already under way in California to bring Asians (now 7 percent of that state's population) into a party attuned to their basic attitudes. Education is the critical issue here. Asians might take a lead in reforming some metropolitan school systems, if given enough of a political nudge. Certainly, the GOP should take the lead in fighting anti-Asian violence and prejudice. The embattled Civil Rights Commission was starting to do just that.

•Approach, with caution, some alliances with neoliberals. Wariness is called for because it's not clear that these much-talked-about guys have any more electoral divisions than the neoconservatives, which is to say fewer than one. A pol who practiced their sort of tough-choice politics, Mark White, just got thumped for it in Texas. Still, the neolibs can be helpful in muting the media outcry if we are to do something about the middle-class transfer economy, and they can help in formulating underclass policies as well. Genuine welfare and housing reform could get a boost from a new federalism push (remember all those GOP governors!), but this will likely have to wait until after the Reagan presidency (the Nixon-China factor). Some very bad things will get worse in the inner cities in the meantime, however, and a second generation of teen males there could be set against the society at large. The optimists see a tide of productive immigrants washing over the cities' problems; the optimists do not live in walk-ups or ride the subways.

•Employ populism in the way that Treasury official Richard Darman framed it in a recent speech to the Japan Society: as a club against the fat and happy in Big Government or Big Labor or Big Business. (Food for thought: "professional and managerial" voters went slightly for the Democrats in the '86 congressional races, according to exit polls.) Everybody's got to start working harder in the U.S. and everybody's got to share in the risks. Corporate managements are an easy and appropriate case to start with. Some of their tormentors in investment banking may be next, who knows. The key is to use leveling devices that knock the legislated props from under the high-and-mighty. Tax revision was a start, but it didn't go far enough. Someday—probably not until we've got the same political wherewithal to tackle the middle-class transfers—it will be time to go after the tax subsidy to debt.

Speaking of debt, it is surprising that Paul Volcker figured so little in the election just passed. Was there a gentleman's agreement among all the mudslingers out on the hustings that the big banks would get a ride? You don't have to be a LaRouchie to point out that, regardless of whether the Federal Reserve's monetary policies have been, are, or will be in accordance with Americans' best interests, Money Center Banks With Billions in Bad Loans Shouldn't Be Living Better Than You and Me. Why do their quarterly profits remain so healthy? In part because debtors are paying interest instead of buying goods. U.S. exporting firms with a particular stake in Latin America are waiting allies in an effort to write down the debt and restart trade.

•Join with the New Right where the issue is generalized corruption, but beware the specifics. Pat Robertson is obviously right in a lot of what he's saying about moral failings being at the root of political, social, and economic woes; some conservatives have long said the same thing in less religious tones. Soon a lot more people across the political spectrum will be saying it. But the New Right stumbles at the legislative stage, because Americans in the end like to think they can decide such matters for themselves. And the "good Christian" line that so often seeps out is a loser. The best bet for handling the New Right agenda may, here again, be enhanced federalism. This will not sit well with homosexuals, for whom the Georgia sodomy decision is a rallying point. But the eventual, if uncomfortable, resolution may be that

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"gays" relocate in even greater numbers to tolerant areas, whose GOP in turn co-exists nationally with an intolerant Bible Belt wing the way liberal Democrats did with the old Southerners.

•The educationist lobby is likely to walk away with more money where it's available, but make them pay for it. Between Bill Bennett and the governors, the biggest teacher union is on the run. Don't let up. On discipline, competency tests, and some degree of parental choice, the opposition is isolated. If it seeks safety in the Democratic majority in Congress, blast away. Meanwhile, here too, push to federalize.

•Look for spots to team up with any genuine consumer groups (including purchasing managers) and with think tanks against the protectionist bills. Buy off the liberals with as generalized a retraining program as you can get, but try to resist the easier unemployment-benefits, as the resistance to taking pay cuts can be a bigger barrier to a new job than lack of training (see Britain). Don't be overly afraid of the unions. Their record was mixed in this election and their numbers (except in the public sector, which seems immune to layoffs) are declining, though their wealth in health and pension funds remains enormous.

•On the biggest issue of Reagan's putative revolution, taxes, hold the line in most if not all areas. "The Pledge" was a clever idea and its roundup will serve as the basis for resisting any tax increases on individuals. On the more vexing selective taxes on business, the respective lobbies will have to be depended on to fight better than they did on Superfund. Without an apple-pie environmental cause attached, the standoff on tax increases can be maintained.

These suggested partnerships, together, could make for a tentative governing majority in much of domestic policy before too long. The issue that will be a crucible for any lasting redirection of government is not addressed, however. It is the spending problem. Deadening as it may be to hear its mention, the deficit is more than David Stockman's hobgoblin. Even most of the creative economists who challenge orthodoxy and say the debt binge isn't so abnormal or bad will not defend the misallocation of resources that brings it about. The difference in the Republican camp is between those who see this habit as mere waste and those who see in it the making of ruin.

Despite years of false gloom and doom, I fear calamity. Although in the end, a wrenching experience might be what it takes to bring to boil simmering ideological change, as was the case with the New Deal, one hopes there are other ways. Economic growth can be a limit on government's take. But there has been less evidence of this effect than there has been growth itself in the eighties. As federal fiscal discipline diminishes, the spending burden moves inexorably up. Congress may be largely to blame, but an overall abdication to bigger government is the primary reason why these six years cannot be called a policy or a political revolution. The revolution hasn't happened because Americans—farmers, pensioners, health-care recipients, students, supporters of aid to Israel and Egypt, you name it—weren't and aren't ready for it, no matter how much they fret about deficits to pollsters. Rep. Fred Eckert of upstate New York wrote courageously in the *Wall Street Journal* one month before the election: "Mr. President, put your faith in the people. If you ask them to stand up and support restraint now for the sake of protecting and preserving the solvency of our country, they will respond." Mr. Eckert lost his House seat. □

Franz M. Oppenheimer

THE DRIFT OF GERMAN POLITICS

Don't bank on the Social Democrats, not that credit is due the Christian Democrats.

Bonn

The tallest and most massive office tower in Frankfurt is that of the BFG Bank, one of Germany's largest banks. The building has been a symbol of the economic power of Germany's labor unions. The "G" in BFG stands for *Gemeinwirtschaft*, a term denoting a business conducted not for profit but for the common public interest. Such a business benefits from certain governmental subsidies and tax exemptions. The BFG Bank, as well as groups of large insurance companies, a savings bank, and Neue Heimat, a group of real estate and construction companies, are owned by the major labor unions, which have run this financial empire through a single holding company, BGAG—that is, a Holding Company for Enterprises of a Public Interest.

This bastion of the labor unions in the German economy has long been one of the givens for any analysis of Germany's politics, because the labor unions are allied with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the labor unions' assets have constituted a gigantic war chest for industrial and political battles. During October those assets turned into political liabilities; the real estate empire came to a fall—in the midst of what the media called a scandal. Rumors about financial distress had been rife for at least a year—promoted primarily by the newsweekly *Der Spiegel*. On October 1, the first dainty dish was set before the hungry media: the major portion of the unions' real estate holdings were sold for DM 1.00 to an obscure Berlinese bread manufacturer, whose company presumably would not only be saddled with some DM 8 billion of existing liabilities, but would also have to carry continuing losses, there being no likely remedy for stopping them.

I have tried hard to understand why an investment gone wrong and its sale constitute a scandal; but despite questioning numerous presumably knowledgeable people, I still do not understand it. Many of the properties sold were apartment houses built for people who could pay only modest rentals in the first postwar years when housing for them was simply not available, and would not have been built by private entrepreneurs or without special governmental benefits. Even the sternest critics of the unions concede that their determination to put roofs over people's heads was a historic achievement. It was human, not criminal, to overestimate the future demand for cheap housing and the future value of unimproved land, bought in anticipation of continuing demand. One could share the concern of tenants, mostly union members, over the consequences for them of having as a landlord a private baker rather than a corporation owned by Social-Democratic comrades. Yet none of the media and politicians who cried foul over the betrayal of the tenants had suggested any better solution for the company's troubles.[1]

Still, had nothing further occurred before the elections, it is possible that prospects of the SPD would not have been seriously damaged. But in the last week of October new and damaging stories about the labor unions made the opening of the television news and the front page of the newspapers every day. First the labor holding company's chairman refused to answer any questions before a committee of the Bundestag investigating Neue Heimat on the grounds that they intruded into confidential business information. The committee reacted by having him arrested on a Sunday evening during the opening session of the convention of the Metal Workers Union, the largest of the German labor unions, in Hamburg. Two police officials accompanied the chairman before a magistrate, after

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[1]As we go to press, the unions, under pressure from the banks, have suffered the final humiliation of having to agree to buy back Neue Heimat.

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which he was dispatched to jail. The provision of the code of criminal procedure relied on for the arrest had never before been applied to a refusal to answer in a parliamentary as opposed to a court proceeding, and the legality of the arrest will be in doubt until the Supreme Court has decided the issue. Meanwhile conservative politicians and most of the media berated the arrogance and lawlessness of the unions, while SPD politicians called the dramatic arrest "shameless ham acting."

By Tuesday afternoon the chairman was out of jail again, but neither out from under the threat of jail nor out of the media. And by the end of the week the Dusseldorf regional office of the German IRS published an audit report on the regional building construction group of the Neue Heimat, which, for the first time, seemed to give substance to the accusations of scandal:

> Neue Heimat, Nordrhein Westfalen, has drawn a wide circle of illegal actions. . . . Almost all areas of law protecting the public are involved. By taking impermissible risks, manipulating of financial statements, paying illegal dividends, granting improper advantages to third parties and to affiliated companies, as well as by participating in risky enterprises unrelated to the proper purposes of Neue Heimat, the management has given a spectacle of almost routine illegal transactions.

The audit report pointed out that the legal purpose of constructing apartments under the legal status of the "common public interest" was to help broad groups of the population, and that the company had acted contrary to that purpose and violated the law to the point of endangering the company's existence. "Hence," the report concluded, ". . . the cancellation of the qualification as an enterprise for the common public interest is required."

When the SPD announced its new party program at the party's convention in Nuremberg last September, it did not expect that the voters would be talking about the union's real estate instead of the party's new program—which constitutes a repudiation of the principles that had given it its past victories. Yet compared to the significance of that repudiation, the parochial concerns over the business ventures of the labor unions are frivolous. In Nuremberg, and since then, the SPD advocated phasing out in ten years nuclear plants, partly built under its government, abolishing nuclear weapons, i.e., the Pershing missiles installed at the request of the SPD government under Helmut Schmidt in Eastern and Western Europe, thus repudiating NATO defense strategy, and cancelling the German-American agreement on SDI. Add to that witches' brew the concepts of "equidistance" from the United States and the Soviet Union, and of "partnership for peace" with the Soviet Union, and only the blindest optimist in Cambridge, Massachusetts can be able to foresee anything other than the end of NATO and, at best, the Finlandization of Europe, if the SPD should return to power after January 25, 1987.

Fortunately, there is no prospect of this coming to pass. Such is the conclusion to be drawn from the elections for the state parliament of Bavaria on October 12, that is, after the Nuremberg party convention and after the sale of the unions' real estate empire but before the latest sensations about the labor unions' business transactions. In those elections Franz Josef Strauss's conservative CSU (the Bavarian sister party and governmental coalition partner of the Christian Democratic Union [CDU]) once again obtained the absolute majority it has maintained since 1970, with almost 56 percent of the total vote. The SPD, which had reached a high of 36 percent in 1968, did even worse than four years ago and sank to an all-time low of 27.5 percent. And there is evidence that numerous industrial workers switched their votes to the conservatives, probably because of disgust with the SPD's new stand for the abolition of nuclear energy, a stand which jeopardizes workers' jobs. Thus in Munich the SPD lost 10 percent as compared with 5 percent statewide, and in other large cities its losses were also disproportionally high.

The news from Bavaria, however, was not all good. The Greens, compared to which the Social Democrats are Midwestern Republicans, increased their votes from 4.6 percent four years ago to 7.5 percent. In one significant place they did spectacularly better: in the Munich section of Schwabing, the home of artists and intellectuals, they reached 20 percent. In the election district of Schwandorf, where a controversial nuclear reprocessing plant is to be built, the SPD gained the absolute majority, increasing its votes from 40.8 percent to 50.9 percent. Finally, the indications that most of the SPD's losses were due to lower voter participation—70 percent as against 78 percent four years ago—should dampen any undue euphoria about the health of conservative conviction in Germany's conservative heartland.

A curious footnote to the Bavarian state elections is the worry of the conservative party leadership over the unexpected showing of a new "Republican" party founded by a TV personality, Franz Schönhuber (a name that could come out of a Bavarian comedy), who broke with the CSU, primarily because of Franz Josef Strauss's new softness on East Germany (he was instrumental in getting them a major credit) and disgust with the influx of Asian immigrants (now stopped) into Germany through East Berlin. The Republicans obtained 3 percent—enough to make conservative party managers consider whether they should not shift more to the right, thus echoing the views of a number of people that there is a perceptible revival of nationalist, right-wing feeling, views for which I can find no basis in any observable facts. Be that as it may, the Republicans are not organized for waging a national election campaign, and there is not enough time left before the elections to perfect a national organization.

"Keep Going Germany—Stable Prices—Retirement Benefits—Secure Pensions—More Employment—CDU—The Future."

If in addition to extrapolating the results of the Bavarian elections one factors in two further developments, a victory of the conservative coalition next January seems certain. One of these factors is the impact of the latest media excitement over the business affairs of the labor unions that is bound to reduce Social Democratic votes.[2] Another is the increasing evidence, clearly perceived by people in all walks of life, of the vacuity of the Social Democrats' candidate for the chancellorship, Johannes Rau. At first his engaging looks and likable TV personality seemed full of promise; and his victory in the state elections of Rheinland-Westfalia in May 1985 was often but probably falsely attributed to these personal charms. In fact his victory was due to something else: Rau may be a lightweight, but most observers believe that his then CDU opponent was a featherweight. The contest was unequal. Now Rau is trying to engender enthusiasm in the manner of Gary Hart: he calls for new approaches in creating jobs, increasing investment, greater justice in taxation—but he seems unable to say how and why those approaches, to the extent he defines them at all, would do better than those used by the government of Chancellor Kohl. Indeed it would be hard for any candidate to do so, because the Kohl government is doing fine: unemployment is down, GNP is growing, subsidies for housing, education, and babies have been increased, the duration of unemployment insurance payments has been extended, there has been no inflation, and taxes have been lowered.

The voters are not about to shoot Santa Claus. →

[2]The outcome of the state elections in Hamburg on November 9 confirms this prediction: Unexpectedly the SPD, until then the largest party with an absolute majority in parliament, lost 10 percent of its previous votes, obtaining only 41.8 percent, and ceded its first place to the CDU. This debacle for the SPD in one of its bastions is generally blamed on the troubles of Neue Heimat.

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It would be enjoyable to report that loyalty to NATO, a realistic appraisal of the Soviet threat, and an intellectual commitment to a liberal market economy will determine the outcome of the next election. But apart from intellectuals and many of the young, voters simply agree with a CDU election poster which reads: "Keep Going Germany—Stable Prices—Retirement Benefits—Secure Pensions—More Employment—CDU—The Future."

An illustration of the general apathy about issues of foreign policy can be found in the absence of public outrage over a bizarre agreement negotiated by the SPD with East Germany's official party, the SED. Inspired, no doubt, by the nuclear free zone of Afghanistan, the agreement contemplates a nuclear free corridor of 150 km on each side of the barbed wire that separates free and Soviet Germany.

An illustration of the prevalence of illusions about the Soviets was the excitement of the media and politicians of the opposition caused by Chancellor Kohl's offhand remark in an interview with *Newsweek* that the good public relations of Mr. Gorbachev are not necessarily evidence of good intentions, no more than Dr. Goebbels's good public relations were. Nobody seems to have had the courage to point out that Mr. Kohl's reference was apt. The moral superiority of the Soviet regime to that of the Third Reich has become dogma.[3]

If the Bavarian defeat of the SPD will be followed by a similar defeat next January—when I expect the SPD to do no better than it did in the national election of June 1983, when it dropped from 43 percent in 1980 to 38 percent of the vote—the party's course will be uncertain. Its second defeat in four years may embitter the activists and drive the party even further to the radical left and to the margin of German political life. Such an outcome would weaken the stability of a country that for the last thirty years was built on the presence of two large and essentially middle-of-the-road parties embodying a national consensus on all material issues of defense and foreign policy. If, on the other hand, defeat will prompt the party to repudiate its evil genius, Willy Brandt, and to return to the principles of its grand old guard—Helmut Schmidt at his zenith, Karl Schiller, Hans Apel, and Walter Hesselbach, the creator of labor's economic empire and the former chief of the labor unions' holding company—the party can look forward to a comeback, and the Atlantic Alliance to a less uncertain future. □

[3]So, according to a poll published by *Der Spiegel* in November, is the moral superiority of Gorbachev to President Reagan. Ninety percent of German citizens, "their minds boggled" by their chancellor's aberration, said the *Spiegel*, believe that Kohl's remark was wrong; 27 percent believe in Gorbachev's honest intentions, as against 24 percent who believe the same of Reagan's. *Der Spiegel* devoted its lead articles, 15 pages of them, to Kohl's remark.

Arch Puddington

LIFE IN LIBERATED VIETNAM

Who was it that said things would be different?

The nature of Vietnamese Communism was once the subject of angry debate in the United States. Indeed, the debate had important repercussions, especially in the early years of the antiwar movement when intellectual arguments for and against American involvement in Vietnam were being shaped. For while some within the protest camp concluded that the horrors of Communism were preferable to the horrors of a protracted war, the majority simply denied that a Stalinist fate awaited the South Vietnamese at all. Instead they claimed that Ho Chi Minh and other Communist leaders understood the folly of trying to impose on the South an alien ideology and way of life. Above all else, they said, Ho and his followers were nationalists who desired nothing more than to replace the regime of corrupt generals with a system consistent with Vietnamese history, culture, and tradition. Certain changes could of course be anticipated: the "comprador" bourgeoisie would be expropriated; war profiteers would forfeit their ill-gotten wealth; the sleazier aspects of Saigon life would be rooted out; and most important of all, corruption—rampant, officially condoned, and commented on *ad nauseam* by the Western press—would be eliminated.

Not that many Americans seem really to care about what kind of society has been "constructed" since the fall of Saigon. Many who advocated the military defeat of the North today regard Vietnam with a sense of shame; they would prefer to concentrate on the struggles of the present than the setbacks of the past. On the other hand, antiwar activists have adopted a stance best described as calculated ignorance. Those who wrote and speechified about Vietnam's "different" brand of revolution, who unearthed fact after fact to demonstrate the democratic character of the Communists and Vietcong, who achieved instant, if fleeting, stardom as revisionist scholars and underground journalists—they not only do not know much about life in revolutionary Vietnam, they seem determined to avoid the issue of Vietnam at all costs.

In fact, Communism in Vietnam has turned out to be precisely what its former defenders said it would never be: still another variant of the Soviet system. With the exception of a violent internal party purge, all the elements of traditional Stalinism are present: the taming of religion, destruction of a once-lively press, socialist realism as the only acceptable cultural norm, strict control of internal movement, persecution of national minorities, destruction of the private sector accompanied by irrational economic policies, state control over the "allocation" of jobs and housing, pervasive militarization, and

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the systematic indoctrination of the young.

Nor, as Doan Van Toai reminds us, have the Communists made good on their vow of "reconciliation without retribution."[1] Toai was a Vietcong sympathizer and student rebel during the Thieu era who nonetheless fell victim to Communist persecution for having expressed muted opposition to the regime's postwar economic policies. As a political prisoner under both Thieu and the Communists, Toai is unusually qualified to judge the differences between traditional dictatorships and totalitarian systems.

In his student days under General Thieu, Toai conducted his protest campaigns with a brazenness worthy of campus radicals in Berkeley and Madison. He and his fellow dissidents conducted sit-ins, vigils, and teach-ins, published remorseless attacks on the government, issued non-negotiable demands, even organized a takeover of the National Assembly. On several occasions, Toai took his anti-government message abroad, including a speaking tour of American campuses. All this, bear in mind, in the midst of a deadly serious civil war that his own country was destined to lose.

Although Toai was occasionally arrested, and served several brief jail terms, the government was generally conciliatory. The "repressive junta" engaged in frequent dialogues with the students and invariably made concessions. Just as invariably, its patient attempts to convince the students of the dangers of Communism were scornfully rebuffed. To be sure, some opposition figures were treated harshly. But according to Toai, the authorities were fully capable of distinguishing between amateur revolutionaries like him and the committed Communist or Vietcong agents who were occasionally captured. Ordinary dissidents were not confined in the infamous "tiger cages"; these were reserved for genuine subversives.

In discussing the evolution of his political consciousness, Toai lays great stress on the cleverness of Hanoi's broadcast propaganda, which emphasized nationalist and anti-imperialist themes and scrupulously avoided the touchy matter of postwar domestic arrangements. He even believed Hanoi's ludicrous boast of having forged an "economic miracle" at a time when North Vietnam already ranked as one of the poorest societies in Asia. An initial dose of reality was provided when the weary Northern troops triumphantly entered Saigon only to be bedazzled by the South's consumer society.

A second jolt came when Toai was asked to serve on a commission empowered to draw up an economic plan for the South. He reluctantly accepted the appointment after receiving assurances that the regime did not envision immediate, far-reaching socialization. This pledge too proved a lie, and when Toai objected—mildly—to plans for massive nationalization and confiscation, he was soon arrested.

Toai spent nearly 900 days in various Saigon prisons, including a brief stint in a cell he had occupied under Thieu. He quickly learned that among the most revolutionary changes ushered in by the new regime was the status of the political prisoner.

One of the most impressive achievements of Communism in Vietnam was an astonishingly thorough ideological census conducted almost immediately after the fall of Saigon.

To begin with, Toai was never officially charged with a crime, nor even informally apprised of the reasons for his arrest. His interrogations, if such they can be called, consisted of writing and rewriting an autobiography. This isolation and uncertainty was the result of calculated policy, and not bureaucratic sloppiness. The goal was to deprive the political prisoner of the dignity and sense of honor that often is his sole source of strength. In this, the Communists were quite successful. During Toai's wartime run-ins with the police he could always count on the support of family, friends, opposition politicians, journalists, lawyers, even concerned Americans. Now all that remained was the party, an implacable bureaucratic monolith that could neither be resisted nor reasoned with.

The prison routine was organized to reinforce the inmate's isolation. Sleeping and moving about were not permitted during the day, and if the cell leader was an especially zealous revolutionary, prisoners might not be allowed to talk either. Cells were five to ten times as crowded as in pre-Communist times, and the overcrowding forced prisoners to sleep, packed together, on their sides.

The prisoner's total dependence on his jailer lasted throughout Toai's term. After fifteen months, he had yet to meet one inmate who had been officially charged with a crime. Prisoners were allowed no contact or correspondence with the outside world, nor did they have an inkling of how to behave to expedite release. Noisily proclaiming one's loyalty to the Revolution appeared no more effective than silence. The reasons for release were just as obscure as those for arrest.

Toai experienced only one dimension of the vast Vietnamese gulag. While the more prominent political prisoners, particularly those once counted as loyal to the Revolution, were consigned to Saigon's jails, the majority of errant southerners were packed off to reeducation camps.[2] The Vietnamese Communists take reeducation much more seriously than have the Soviet or East European regimes, even during Stalin's time. There was nothing haphazard about it: reeducation was carefully planned and efficiently executed. Its scope was massive, since the potential candidates for reeducation ranged in the millions, embracing South Vietnamese soldiers, civil servants, doctors, teachers (almost all male teachers were sent to the camps), and anyone else who could be accused of having contributed, however tangentially, to the war effort.

At the reeducation camps, mornings and evenings, inmates attended long indoctrination sessions. Afternoons were reserved for discussion, with prisoners expected to regurgitate material from the morning lectures. Prisoners wrote draft after draft of their autobiography, with an eye towards unearthing weaknesses in class background that had led them to side with the imperialists and their Vietnamese puppets. Moreover, the prisoner could not fudge his way through; as one former camp inmate recollects, the autobiography was a complex and formidable challenge:

During my 32 months in different camps in South Vietnam, I had to write at least 30 self-criticism reports. A really daunting thing was that Communist cadres in the reeducation camps usually compared the details of one report with those of another. If one of your reports is inconsistent with another, you're in serious trouble. As a result, prisoners all the year round live under pressure, because no one can remember the details of what he declared two or three years earlier.

Reeducation reached its high point with the confession. It would be read aloud before an assembly of prisoners and camp officials, after which the author was subjected to a session of criticism and self-criticism. Naturally, the more "class enemies" implicated by the prisoner, the more valuable his con-

[1] *The Vietnamese Gulag*, Doan Van Toai and David Chanoff, Simon and Schuster, $18.95. Also recommended is *Portrait of the Enemy* (Random House, $17.95), edited by the same two authors.

[2] One of the best surveys of Vietnam's prison system is *Violations of Human Rights in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, April 30, 1975-April 30, 1983*, by Ginetta Sagan and Stephen Denney. The study was published in 1983 by the Aurora Foundation. Another excellent source is *Vietnam Under Communism, 1975-1982*, Nguyen Van Canh with Earle Cooper, Hoover Institution Press, 1983.

Pike's subject is the remarkable army of Vietnam, but what he tells us about the use of force in politics, the nature of organizations, and the limits of both technology and ideology is of far wider importance.
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fession. To resist the incessant pressure for self-abasement was futile. For while the Communists did eventually establish a veneer of legality—i.e., trials were conducted and maximum sentences set—in practice sentences for political offenders were of indefinite duration.

The authorities also attempted to involve prisoners' relatives in the "rehabilitation process." The party's official position was that a prisoner's relatives shared in his guilt, at least indirectly. The demands of the authorities were twofold: that relatives encourage prisoners to cooperate by issuing confessions, naming names, and so on; and that families relocate to the New Economic Zones, with the implied promise that the early release of a loved one would follow. Billed as agricultural communes, the Zones actually functioned as labor camps without barbed wire: wild, uncultivated areas where urban dwellers, unused to farm work, frequently succumbed to overwork, malaria, or snake-bite.

One of the most impressive achievements of Communism in Vietnam was an astonishingly thorough ideological census conducted almost immediately after the fall of Saigon. The goal, in Saigon at least largely fulfilled, was the interrogation and identification by political belief of every citizen in the South. Teams of party cadres visited each household, after which family members were classified by ideology and class background, with those expressing suspect opinions or revealing questionable class backgrounds designated for arrest, reeducation, or deportation to the Zones. A family's fate was decided without resort to legal proceeding: thousands of ordinary people were jailed or uprooted on the say-so of low-level party functionaries.

If the Communists have demonstrated a unique ineptitude in administering Vietnam's economy, they can at least claim remarkable success in how quickly they consolidated total social control. In this, they relied not on raw police power, but on an elaborate neighborhood surveillance bureaucracy.[3] They divided each neighborhood into "clusters" comprising a few families, and placed a security deputy, usually a housewife, in charge of vigilance work in each unit. The security deputy in turn apprised the police of the comings-and-goings within the cluster, taking special note of visitors from outside the cluster, or the unexplained absences of cluster families. Each family was required to maintain a book recording the names of visitors or trips made by family members. The books were examined by security officials during frequent house searches.

The security officials were obsessed with gaining information about ordinary Saigon citizens, in particular anything which might indicate an intention to flee abroad. Here the motive was not merely loyalty to the Revolution; party cadres were engaged in serious competition to seize the possessions of those who escaped or who were caught trying to escape.

Inside information often came through the children. Organized into Vanguard groups, youngsters were encouraged during meetings to discuss any unusual events at home, as well as political opinions expressed by their parents. This was a source of constant anxiety for the parents, especially those preparing to flee. The revelation that a child's parents were selling off the family furniture, for example, might result in banishment to the New Economic Zones. It was also during Vanguard meetings that children were introduced to the practice of criticism and self-criticism, as a means of training them to control each other.

Great emphasis was placed on "collective" activities. Loudspeakers were installed in each neighborhood as an omnipresent reminder of the party's inescapable presence. Mornings began at 4 a.m., when the loudspeakers summoned the children outside for collective exercises. The loudspeakers continued to broadcast throughout the day, providing lists of youths selected for military service, explaining the latest decrees regulating or restricting people's lives, or airing dreary selections of "revolutionary music."

In 1977, two years after the Communist triumph, the authorities announced their intention to "socialize" the economy.[4] Many of the larger businesses had already been nationalized, but thousands of smaller enterprises remained in private hands. The transition to a fully nationalized economy always poses a serious headache to Communist regimes, with its inevitable shortages and mass poverty. To minimize popular discontent, the authorities decided to eschew half-measures: on the night of March 23, 1978, teams of young party cadres arrived, unexpected and unannounced, at practically every private business in Saigon. They sealed off the premises, conducted an inventory, and in effect expropriated the contents for the state. By the summer, some 30,000 businesses had been nationalized or closed, and the state found itself in complete control of the legal, non-agricultural economy. At the same time, a currency "reform" was instituted, further wiping out the savings of the middle class.

For the people of South Vietnam, the Communist leadership's determined adherence to a Stalinist economic course has brought about a devastating decrease in the standard-of-living, widespread unemployment, and a marked deterioration in basic social services. Surrounded by countries whose economies are among the fastest growing in the world, Vietnam—North and South—today registers a per capita income that is only slightly higher than Ethiopia's. Yet the regime's economic policies are not entirely irrational. The Communists knew full well that socialism could not compete with the market, particularly in the South, where capitalism had produced a measure of prosperity—prosperity, moreover, which stood in marked contrast to the poverty and shortages of North Vietnam. The regime's apprehensions were made explicit in *Nhan Dan*, the party organ:

> Some people contend that integrated revolution, socialism and the abolition of the capitalist economy are not necessary, that socialism can set good examples while overcoming its own shortcomings and that the good points of capitalism and private economic systems can be of use. Realities in the past three years have adequately exposed the negative aspects of these two economic systems. Although being gradually limited and restricted to a very small area, the capitalist economy has continued to "rule the roost." So long as it exists, the reorganization of agriculture and handicrafts along socialist lines will be very difficult. Similarly, as long as capitalist trade survives, it will be impossible to build a strong socialist trade.

The Vietnamese were thus learning the wisdom of Lenin's famous maxim that "the struggle between socialism and capitalism is even harder than war." The difficulty of the struggle was most pointedly demonstrated in the countryside, where the authorities were compelled to beat a tactical retreat from an ambitious collectivization scheme. During the war, Hanoi's propaganda had carefully avoided references to collectivization, stressing land redistribution and the sanctity of private ownership. Nor in fact was there a "land problem" in the South; thanks in part to a "land to the tiller" program adopted at the urging of the United States, the power of the large feudal landowners had been broken. With no real "class enemy" to serve as a hate object, the Communists could offer little incentive for peasants to join the Soviet-style collective farms they hoped to establish. Coercion therefore had to be applied, but a little more subtly. The major instrument was taxation. Land values were assessed not in terms of what was actually produced, but at an arbitrary figure said to reflect what *should* be produced under ideal circumstances. Farmers who could not meet tax payments faced confiscation and possible deportation to the New Economic Zones. Not surprisingly, many did join one of the various collective entities; but many others held out, and even today full collectivization has eluded the Communists.

Surrounded by countries whose economies are among the fastest growing in the world, Vietnam today registers a per capita income that is only slightly higher than Ethiopia's.

If Vietnamese socialism could not compete with the remnants of Saigon's free enterprise, much the same was true in the cultural sphere, and so a number of the same remedies were applied by the new rulers. The "lively and obstreperous" press of the South was quickly eliminated; instead of some thirty or so newspapers, there were now two dreary party organs. Saigon's bookstores were shut down, and their inventories examined by Vanguard cadres, who destroyed practically all the books published in the South, even those critical of the military regime. The hunt for subversive materials was extended to private homes. As Doan Van Toai recalls: "Raids by especially zealous commandos were capped off by impromptu book burnings in streets, rare, religious, and historical works going up in the same blazes that consumed trashy romances." In a similar vein, the censors went to work eliminating American music, including protest songs by Joan Baez and other antiwar stalwarts. Dress and hair styles were not overlooked: Communist cadres armed with scissors would stop young Vietnamese on the street, shearing off long hair or flared trousers.

The cultural offensive represented something more fundamental than revolutionary values. There was a justified

[3] An extremely valuable description of daily existence in postwar Vietnam is *After Saigon Fell: Daily Life Under the Vietnamese Communists*, by Nguyen Long with Harry H. Kendall, Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1981.

[4] See Canh's *Vietnam Under Communism* for analysis of the regime's economic policy. Also, William J. Duiker's *Vietnam Since the Fall of Saigon*, Ohio University Press, 1985 (revised edition).

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fear that a free, Western, capitalist culture would infect the soldiers and officials who remained in the South as an army of occupation. As Toai shrewdly notes:

> Most of [the northern soldiers] were simple country people who had firmly believed the crude whip-and-slave propaganda that had been their only information about conditions in the South. Now they saw not only that quite ordinary people had refrigerators and cars, but that the farmers used tractors and the fishermen motorboats. As these revelations sank in, you could see their zeal almost visibly crumbling. An epidemic of cynicism began to take hold, its most conspicuous symptom being the uncontrollable hunger for goods.

The disintegration of political faith had its most palpable reflection in the widespread corruption at all levels of government. It goes without saying that corruption is endemic to any system where rewards are apportioned on the basis of politics, rather than merit or the market. Previous Communist societies, however, had undergone an initial period when the ideals of the revolution are taken with the utmost seriousness by party members, when party workers are convinced they are building a system morally superior to all that had come before it. South Vietnam never experienced this period of revolutionary euphoria.

The old Saigon corruption—prostitutes, bars, shady business dealings—was supplanted by a distinctly Communist brand of corruption. Officially, practically nothing was available; for a bribe, many things could be accomplished, including the most coveted thing of all: flight to freedom. In fact, corruption became semi-officially inscribed in national policy. By law, fleeing the country without permission was illegal, and permission was rarely granted. Unofficially, emigration was allowed, for a price. What was never permitted was open, orderly, safe emigration. The regime desperately wanted the "exit fees" it extorted from the boat people, which in one year was estimated to be 2.5 percent of Vietnam's GNP. The authorities also found it useful to rid the country of those who would not adjust to the new social arrangements. An additional benefit for the new regime of the chaotic mass exodus was the resulting turmoil in neighboring Asian states.

Along with corruption came a new class system, based on political connection, that was even more rigid than the old one based on wealth. For example, the regime established six distinct categories for the ration system, ranging from ministers at the top to ordinary citizens at the bottom. Medical care was similarly organized, with separate hospitals for party members and government officials. For the average resident of Saigon, the health care privileges afforded party members were particularly galling, since medical care in general deteriorated under the Communists. In addition to the shortages of drugs, ordinary Vietnamese were forced to run a bureaucratic gauntlet in order to gain admission to a hospital, even in cases of serious illness. There were even certain medicines reserved for party members which were unavailable to the public.

What, then, is the lesson of Vietnam? For the people, and especially the elites, of other Third World countries, the most important lesson is the Communist success in politically disarming the South Vietnamese through a cleverly packaged set of lies: lies about private property, the rights of peasants, freedom, and national independence. Doan Van Toai describes the South Vietnamese attitude towards Communism—his early attitude as well—as one of "deadly naiveté." Regrettably, Toai and his countrymen are paying dearly for the naiveté; not so those Americans who, having once welcomed a Communist victory in Vietnam, now blithely wish a similar fate on other luckless people in distant lands around the world. □

Dixy Lee Ray

THE GREAT ACID RAIN DEBATE

No one in Washington (or Ottawa) knows what he's talking about.

The Great Acid Rain Debate has been going on for more than a decade. Public alarm in the United States probably dates from a widely publicized 1974 report which concluded that "the northeastern U.S. has an extensive and severe acid precipitation problem." Does it? Probably not. Is rain really acidic? Yes. Does acid rain, or preferably, acid precipitation, really damage forests, lakes and streams, fish, buildings and monuments? Yes, in some instances, but not as the primary or only cause. Can the adverse environmental effects that have been attributed to acid rain—whatever the real cause—be mitigated by reducing the amount of sulfur dioxide emitted to the atmosphere from industrial sources? No, what evidence there is suggests that it cannot be. Is enough known, and understood, about acid precipitation to warrant spending billions of dollars of public funds on supposed corrective measures? Certainly not.

Clearly, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency agrees with this assessment, for the agency's administrator, Lee M. Thomas, said in 1986: "Current scientific data suggests that environmental damage would not worsen materially if acidic emissions continued at their present levels for ten or twenty more years. Acid rain is a serious problem, but it is not an emergency."

That rain is acidic has been known for a long time. Among the first records are a reference to acid rain in Sweden in 1848 and a discussion on the chemistry of English rain in 1872. Sulfur dioxide was established as a possible cause of damage to trees and other plants in Germany in 1867. The commonly repeated alarm that rainfall has become increasingly acidic over the past twenty-five years rests for its validity on an influential and oft-cited series of articles by G. E. Likens and his co-workers published in the 1970s. Careful evaluation by a group of scientists at Environmental Research and Technology Inc. reveals that Likens's research suffered from problems in data collection and analysis, errors in calculations, questionable averaging of some data, selection of results to support the desired conclusions, and failure to consider all the available data. In a more recent study, Vaclav Smil of the University of Manitoba reached similar conclusions. Besides analyzing Likens's methods of determining rain acidity, Smil examined maps of the distribution of acid precipitation in the eastern U.S. between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s, prepared by Likens et al. and publicized as providing "unassailable proofs" of rising acidity. "In reality," Smil concludes, "the measurement errors, incompatibility of collection and analytical procedures, inappropriate extrapolations, weather effects and local interferences, makes such maps very dubious."

Rain forms when molecules of water vapor condense on ice crystals or salt crystals or minute particles of dust in clouds and then coalesce to form droplets that respond to the force of gravity. As rain falls through the atmosphere it can "pick up" or "wash out" chemicals or other foreign materials or pollutants that may be present. Because water is such a good solvent, even in the cleanest air, rainwater dissolves some of the naturally present carbon dioxide, forming carbonic acid. Hence, rainwater is *always acidic* or if you like, acid rain is normal. There is no such thing as naturally neutral rainwater. Scientific studies generally distinguish between "acid rain," i.e., the acidity of rainwater itself, and "acid deposition," i.e., the fallout

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of sulfates, nitrates, and other acidic substances. Acid deposition may be "wet" if washed out of the atmosphere with rain, or "dry" if gases or particles simply settle out.

How acidic is pure water? Despite the fact that water molecules are very stable, with a chemical composition of two parts hydrogen to one part oxygen (H_2O), the molecular structure or architecture is somewhat asymmetrical; the molecules tend both to clump and to dissociate in response to intermolecular forces. Dissociation leads to a few hydrogen ions carrying a positive charge and an equal number of OH or hydroxyl ions with a negative charge. Under normal conditions, in pure distilled water only a few molecules are dissociated, in fact, about two-ten millionths of one percent. Now 2/10,000,000 of 1 percent is an awkward numerical expression. Therefore, for greater ease in expressing the number of dissociated molecules, which is the measure of relative acidity, a method called pH has been adopted. The pH of pure water is 7, the numerical expression of neutrality. Any pH measure below 7 is acidic, any above 7 is basic or alkaline. The pH scale is logarithmic (like the Richter scale for measuring intensity of earthquakes); therefore a change of one pH unit, for example, from pH 5 to pH 6, is a ten-fold change.

Water in the atmosphere normally contains some carbonic acid from dissolved carbon dioxide, and the pH of clean rainwater even in pristine regions of the earth is about pH 5.0 to 5.5.[1]

[1]The pH of clean rainwater compares to that of carrots (pH 5.0), and lies between the acidity of spinach (pH 5.4) and bananas (pH 4.6). Rainwater is far less acidic, for example, than cola drinks (pH 2.2).

Any lower pH is believed to be environmentally damaging. Lakes, streams, rivers, ponds, indeed all bodies of fresh water may and usually do receive dissolved material, either acidic or alkaline, from runoff and from the soil or earthen basin in which the water stands or flows. Both acid and alkaline lakes are natural phenomena, and exist without intervention by humans.

Getting an accurate measure of the pH of rainwater is more difficult than it may at first seem. Certainly it is no simple litmus test; accurate procedures require careful laboratory analyses. For example, early work—that is, measurements taken before 1968—generally used soft glass containers; it is now known that even when the containers were carefully cleaned and when the analysis was done very soon after collection, the soft glass contributed alkalinity to the sample, and this increased with time in storage. Indeed the range of error attributable to the use of soft glass is sufficient so that it might account for the difference in pH measurements between 1955-56 and 1965-66 reported by Coghill and Likens. Rainwater collection made in metal gauges, a common procedure before the 1960s, also influenced the results. An experiment to test this difference, using a dilute solution of sulfuric acid with a pH of 4.39, gave a reading of pH 5.9 when held for a short time in a metal gauge.

It is also now known that a rainwater sample taken at the beginning of a storm will give a pH reading different from that taken during and at the end of the rainfall; that measurements may differ widely at different locales within a region; and that weather and climate affect the results. With regard to this last phenomenon, it may be that the more alkaline results reported by Likens for the northeast U.S. in the 1950s were related to the drought conditions that prevailed during those years. By contrast, the 1960s were rainy.

Is enough known about acid precipitation to warrant spending billions of dollars of public funds on supposed corrective measures?

When dry conditions persist, dust particles are more prevalent, and if they are present in the rain samples, they can neutralize some of the acidity and shift the pH toward the alkaline end of the scale.

For several reasons, then, it now appears that the historical data, on which so much of the alarm and worry has been based, are of insufficient quality and quantity to establish as indisputable a trend toward higher acidity in the rainfall of the northeastern United States.

Complicating the acid rain picture still further are results of samples recently collected from ice frozen in the geological past, and from rainfall in remote regions of the earth. These results suggest that the relationship between acidity and the industrial production of sulfur dioxide emissions is at best extremely tenuous.

Analysis of ice pack samples in the Antarctic and in the Himalayas indicates that precipitation deposited at intervals hundreds and thousands of years ago in those pristine environments had a pH value of 4.4 to 4.8. Some measurements were as low as 4.2. Examination of Greenland icepack samples shows that many times in the last 7,000 years the acidity of the rain was as high as pH 4.4. In some cases the periods of extremely high acidity lasted for a year or more. Coal burning utilities spewing out sulfur dioxide could not have been responsible, but these periods of high acidity do correspond to times of major volcanic eruptions. Also remarkable is the period of low acidity in the ice lasting from 1920 to 1960, when no major volcanic eruptions occurred but industrial pollution increased.

Recent measurements taken by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Mauna Loa in Hawaii at 3,500 meters above sea level gave average pH values of 4.9 regardless of wind direction. Moreover, sampling at Cape Matatula on American Samoa, a monitoring site selected for its extreme cleanliness, resulted in measurements from pH 4.5 to 6.0 in the rainwater.

To gather more systematic data on the pH of rain in remote areas, a Global Precipitation Chemistry Project was set up in 1979. Samples of rainwater were tested from five sites: Northern Australia, Southern Venezuela, Central Alaska, Bermuda, and Amsterdam Island in the southern Indian Ocean halfway between Africa and Australia. The first results were published in 1982. Precipitation was everywhere acidic, pH values averaging between 4.8 and 5.0. Now it is possible to imagine that the Bermuda results could have been affected by long range transport of sulfate aerosols or other atmospheric pollution from the U.S., or that Alaskan atmosphere is polluted from coal burning in the Midwest, but that does not appear to be reasonable. At the remaining sites, including American Samoa, clearly man-made emissions could not have caused the measured acidity.

Conversely, in some areas where one might expect a low pH, actual measurements of the rainwater reveal higher than anticipated pH values. Twelve sites in Mexico, for example, measured pH 6.2 to 6.8; nine inland sites in India gave a median pH of 7.5 (range 5.8 to 8.9). It turns out that the expected natural acidity of the rain is neutralized by suspended alkaline particles, mainly dust from dry fields, unpaved streets, and so on.

In China seventy percent of the basic energy comes from burning coal; sulfur dioxide releases are very high, particularly in urban areas. Rainwater in Peking is nevertheless close to neutral, most values falling between pH 6.0 and 7.0. Interestingly, the same samples have heavy concentrations of sulfate and nitrate ions as well as suspended alkaline matter, probably dust blown from desert regions. The pH is determined by complex interaction among these aerosols, ions, and particles.

Acid rain can also be buffered or neutralized by soil conditions. Recent studies at nearly 200 sites in the United States show that in the northern Great Plains high levels of calcium and magnesium ions occur, along with ammonia associated with animal husbandry and fertilizers. These combine to neutralize acidic precipitation. In the western half of North America 75 to 96 percent of all acid anions are so neutralized. By way of contrast, in the northeastern U.S. 52 percent of all acid anions are not so neutralized.

It might be that lower levels of alkaline dust, especially in the northeast, are a consequence of successful

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air pollution control, resulting in the effective capture of particulate matter from industrial smoke. This possibility was investigated in 1985 by Smil, who reports a great loss of airborne alkaline material between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s. This loss resulted from large scale replacement of coal as fuel for homes, transportation, and industrial boilers, as well as highly efficient removal of fly ash from flue gases. Although exact and accurate calculations are not possible, reasonable estimates of the largely alkaline particulate emissions were about nine million tons annually in the 1950s; this fell to about four million tons by 1975. Actually the total loss of man-made alkaline material over the northeast was probably much larger than the estimates indicate since emission controls were also applied to the iron, steel, and cement industries. And the amount of barren, dusty land shrank with advancing settlements, paved roads, lawns, and considerable re-growth of forests. Another contributing factor to loss of alkaline materials may have been the practice of prompt extinction of forest fires. Wildfires, when left to burn themselves out, result in an accumulation of alkaline ash, which, together with the minerals it contains, acts to buffer natural acidity in the soil and redress the mineral imbalance.

One final point should be made about natural acidity and alkalinity. Soils along the North Pacific coast tend to be quite acidic, a usual feature in areas that had been glaciated. Peat bogs are common; cranberries, huckleberries, blueberries, and Douglas Fir trees—all requiring acid soil—are abundant. For comparison, soils in the arid west and southwest are alkaline, and rarely measure a pH below 9.0. By contrast the soils in New England are among the most acid in the world. Representative Adirondack soil measures pH 3.4. Soils in southeast Canada are similar. That region also was glaciated, and the thin poor soil overlays acid granitic material. In other words, the soils of the northeast United States are by nature acidic, and always have been, environmentalist claims notwithstanding.

There is an extensive and growing body of scientific literature on atmospheric chemistry, much of it highly technical. Gradually, understanding is also growing, but many areas of uncertainty remain. Experts are divided on exactly how acids are formed in clouds, in rainwater, and upon deposition. There is some disagreement too on the relative amount and importance of acid precursors from man-made versus natural sources. Most knowledgeable scientists tend to take a middle view, that the amount of pollutants in the air, particularly of sulfates and nitrates, on a global scale comes about equally from natural and human sources, but even this is a supposition or educated guess.

Natural Sources

Sulfur and nitrogen compounds—the "acid" in acid rain—are produced naturally by the decay of organic matter in swamps, wetlands, intertidal areas, and shallow waters of the oceans. How much is contributed to the atmosphere from these sources is not known for certain, but it is considerable. Estimates of naturally produced sulfates and other sulfur compounds are from 35 percent to 85 percent of the total—a rather wide range!—and naturally occurring nitrogen compounds are generally believed to be 40 percent to 60 percent of the total. Some experts go further and claim that nature contributes over 90 percent of the global nitrogen. Considering the additional sulfur that emanates from volcanoes and fumaroles and hot springs and ocean spray, and the nitrogen fixed by lightning, the generally accepted contribution from natural sources may be underestimated.

That rain is acidic has been known for a long time. Among the first records are a reference to acid rain in Sweden in 1848 and a discussion on the chemistry of English rain in 1872.

The contribution of lightning to the acidity of rain is significant. Two strokes of lightning over one square kilometer (four-tenths of a square mile) produce enough nitric acid to make eight-tenths of an inch of rain with a pH of 3.5. In fact, it has been estimated that lightning creates enough nitric acid so that annual rainfall over the world's land surfaces would average pH 5.0 even without taking into account other natural sources of acidity.

The contribution of volcanoes to atmospheric sulfur dioxide seems never to have been taken seriously; acknowledged, yes—but then dismissed as trivial. Perhaps this is related to the fact that volcanoes are studied by geologists and vulcanologists rather than by atmospheric scientists. Or perhaps it's because volcanic mountains tend to be where meteorologists are not. Predicting exactly when an eruption will occur is notoriously undependable, and obtaining direct measurements or samples of ejecta during eruptions is dangerous and can be fatal. During the daylong eruption of Mt. St. Helens on May 18, 1980, over four billion tons of material were ejected. Although large quantities of gases, including sulfur dioxide, were released to the atmosphere, no direct measurements could be made during the major eruption itself. Before May 18, in the period March 29 to May 14, spectroscopic measurements revealed about forty tons per day of sulfur dioxide. By May 25 measuring was resumed and showed 130 to 260 tons per day. On June 6 this increased abruptly to 1,000 tons per day. From the end of June through December of that year the rates of sulfur dioxide ranged from 500 tons per day to 3,400 tons per day. Sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, carbon disulfide, and other sulfur compounds continue to be released from the crater floor and dome, and arise also from fumaroles and the debris of pyroclastic flows.

El Chicon, an exceptionally acidic and sulfurous mountain in Mexico, erupted in early 1982, far more violently than Mt. St. Helens. Materials ejected reached the stratosphere and will probably affect the atmosphere for many years. Again no direct measurements were possible, but it is estimated that twenty million tons of sulfur dioxide were released. Also in the northern hemisphere, Mt. St. Augustine in Alaska erupted twice in 1986 with sulfur fumes detectable in Anchorage many miles away. Sulfur fumes continue to seep from both El Chicon and St. Augustine.

In 1973 two scientists, Stoiber and Jepson, reported data on sulfur dioxide emissions from Central American volcanoes, obtained both by remote sensing and by calculation. They conclude that 10,000 metric tons of sulfur dioxide are released to the atmosphere daily. Extrapolating world-wide, they calculate that volcanoes are responsible for emitting annually about 100 million metric tons of sulfur compounds. Thus nature is responsible for putting large quantities of sulfates and nitrates into the atmosphere.

Man-Made Sources

But so, of course, is man. Industrial activity, transportation, and burning fossil fuel for commercial and domestic purposes all contribute sulfate, nitrates, and other pollutants to the atmosphere. Since passage of the Clean Air Act in 1970 there has been an overall reduction of more than 40 percent in factory and utility sulfur dioxide production. But as sulfur dioxide emissions decrease, nitrogen emissions are increasing, primarily from oil burning and oil used in transportation. Industrial society also produces other air pollutants, including volatile organic compounds, ammonia, and hydrocarbons. Any of these may contribute to the formation of acid rain, either singly or in combination. Further, some man-made pollutants can undergo photo-oxidation in sunlight, leading, for example, to the conversion of sulfur dioxide to highly toxic sulfur trioxide. But even this compound, should it be deposited over the ocean, loses its toxicity due to the extraordinarily high buffering capacity of sea water.

Another photo oxidant, ozone, is possibly the most damaging of all air pollutants derived from human activity. Ozone accumulates in quantities toxic to vegetation in all industrial regions of the world. Ozone is a product of photochemical oxidation be-

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tween oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic substances. The latter may be unburned hydrocarbons (e.g., from automobile exhaust in cars not equipped with catalytic converters) or various organic solvents. Ozone is known to cause severe injury and even death to certain forest trees. The best known cases are the decline of white pine in much of eastern North America and ponderosa and Jeffrey pine in the San Bernardino Mountains of California. Ozone acts synergistically with other pollutants and has been shown to cause damage to agricultural crops when exposure occurs along with sulfur and nitrogen oxides.

Thus, singling out sulfur dioxide produced by human activities as the major cause of acid rain is not only a gross over-simplification, but probably wrong.

Effects on Forests

What about the dying forests? Here again the acid rain activists blame sulfur dioxide produced by industry.

Trees, like every other living thing, are not immortal. They too grow old and die. The decline of a forest may be part of the slow but natural process of plant succession, or it may be initiated by any of several stress-causing factors. Each forest and each tree species responds differently to environmental insults, whether natural or human. As Professor Paul D. Mannion of the State University of New York has said: "If one recognizes the complex array of factors that can contribute to the decline of trees, it is difficult to accept the hypothesis that air pollutants are the basis of our tree decline problems today . . . [although] to question the popular opinion on the cause of our decline problems is not to suggest that pollutants do not produce any effect."

Widespread mortality of forest trees has occurred at times and places where pollution stress was probably not a factor. Declines of western white pine in the 1930s and yellow birch in the 1940s and fifties, for example, were induced by drought, while secondary invasion by insects or other disease organisms is most often the ultimate cause of fatality.

Currently the most widely publicized forest decline problem in the U.S. is the red spruce forest in the northern Appalachian Mountains. Few people now cite the widespread mortality in red spruce between 1871 and 1890. The dieback occurred at roughly the same time in West Virginia, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and New Brunswick, and was then attributed to the invasion of a spruce beetle that followed some other stress. What that was is not clear.

The soils of the northeast United States are by nature acidic, and always have been.

Today the dieback symptoms of the red spruce are most pronounced above 900 meters in an environment that is subject to natural stresses such as wind, winter cold, nutrient-poor soils, and possible high levels of pollutants, heavy metals, and acidity in the clouds that often envelop the forest. The relative importance of each of these stresses has not been rigorously investigated.

The affected trees grow in one of the windiest locations in North America. It is known that wind can dry out or even remove red spruce foliage, especially if rime ice has formed; it can also cause root damage by excessive tree movements. Tree ring analyses indicate a possible relation between recent cold winters and decline. The abnormal cold extending into spring may have caused the trees to be more susceptible to the adverse effects of pollutants. Arthur H. Johnson and Samuel B. MacLaughlin, who have studied tree rings and the red spruce forest decline, conclude in *Acid Deposition: Long Term Trends* (National Academy Press, 1986) that "there is no indication now that acidic deposition is an important factor in red spruce decline. . . . The abrupt and synchronous changes in ring width and wood density patterns across such a wide area seem more likely to be related to climate than to air pollution." Air borne chemicals might play a role, but they will have to be further assessed.

And then there are the dying forests of Germany. Whereas originally the focus was on acid precipitation and deposition of sulfur dioxide and to a lesser extent nitrogen oxides, emphasis has now shifted to the oxides of nitrogen, hydrocarbons, soil minerals such as aluminum and magnesium, and photo oxidants, chiefly ozone. Sulfur dioxide emissions have been declining in Germany since the mid-1970s, due mainly to the substitution of nuclear energy for coal burning in the production of electricity. But this decline was not accompanied by improvement in the health of forests, suggesting that other factors may be implicated. It is now believed that only in exceptional cases does sulfur dioxide cause direct damage to forests in Germany. But motor vehicle pollution from more than 27 million autos and trucks is among the highest in the world in density per area, and is considered to be a contributing factor to the formation of ozone. Indeed, ozone levels in Germany's damaged forests are often remarkably high. Long-term measurements indicate that the mean value of ozone concentration has increased by one-third over the last twenty years. And the investigators at the Norwegian Forest Research Institute have reached similar conclusions about the importance of ozone in forest declines.

The adoption of the catalytic converter for automobiles in America was primarily to control the release of unburned hydrocarbons in order to reduce the photochemical production of ozone. In this it has functioned well, although it has also led to formation of formaldehyde and larger amounts of acid, especially sulfuric acid. But there is another source of atmospheric hydrocarbons that has not been controlled—cows! American cows burp about fifty million tons of hydrocarbons to the atmosphere annually! There is no known control technology for these emissions. Whether they contribute to ozone formation is also not known, but their presence helps to emphasize the complexity of atmospheric chemistry.

Effects on Lakes and Fish

There are three kinds of naturally occurring acidic lakes: 1) those associated with inorganic acids in geothermal areas (i.e., Yellowstone Park) and sulfur springs (pH 2.0 to 3.0); 2) those found in peat lands, cypress swamps, and rain forests where the acidity is derived from organic acids leached from humus and decaying vegetation (pH 3.5 to 5.0); and 3) those located in areas of weather resistant granitic or silicious bedrock. Only the last-named are involved in the acid rain question. In these lakes and streams, the absence of carbonate rocks means little natural buffering capacity. This type of naturally acidic lake is common in large areas of eastern Canada and the northeastern United States, where glaciers exposed granitic bedrock during the last period of glaciation. The lakes are called "sensitive" because they may readily become further acidified with adverse impacts on aquatic organisms, of which fish are the most important to man. Indeed the most widely proclaimed complaint about the consequence of acid deposition is the reduction or elimination of fish populations in response to surface water acidification.

But again, this is not a recent phenomenon. Dead lakes are not new. A study by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation reveals that the stocking of fish in twelve lakes was attempted and failed as early as the 1920s. Of course, many people did catch fish in the 1920s and 1930s in lakes where fish are not available today. But the fact is that during those years many of the Adirondack lakes were being stocked annually by the Fish and Game Commission; fish did not propagate, and the stocking program was discontinued about 1940.

In the United States 219 lakes have been identified as too acidic to support fish. Two hundred and six of these lakes are in the Adirondacks, but they account for only four percent of the lake surface of New York state alone. This, then, is hardly a national problem; it is local. The same applies to southeast Canada, where the highest percentage of acid lakes is located.

Uncertainty continues whether these acid lakes have always had a low pH or whether human activities have reduced the neutralizing capability of the waters, or the lake basin. A range of human activities could be to blame: use of chemical pesticides to control spruce budworm or black fly infestations, changes in fish hatchery production, change in angler pressure, lumbering, burning of watersheds. On the other hand, declining fish populations were noted in some New York lakes as early as 1918, and bottom sediments deposited eight hundred years ago in Scandinavian lakes are more acid than today's sediments.

To conclude that a decline in fish population is caused by atmospheric acid deposition, it must be established that the lake formerly supported a viable fish population; one or more species of fish formerly present has been reduced or lost; the lake is more acidic now than it was when the fish were present; the increased acid level was not caused by local factors; and other factors, e.g., toxic chemicals, are not present or are unimportant.

Such data are rare. Studies on three lakes in the Adirondacks—Panther, Sagamore, and Woods Lake, which are remote but close enough together to be affected by the same rainfall—disclosed radically different degrees of acidity, large differences that can be ac-

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counted for by the varying geological makeup of the three lake beds and local, surrounding soils and vegetation.

Outside the Adirondack Mountains and New York state, many emotional claims have been made about fish kills in Canada, Norway, and Sweden. Most of the losses are reported in the spring; in Scandinavia fish kills have been reported annually in the springtime for more than one hundred years. This recurring natural phenomenon is likely due to oxygen depletion or to snow melt and rain runoff carrying sudden high concentrations of many materials into lakes and streams, and in fact, the acidity of most waters is greatest in the spring. Modern findings call into question the claim that distant sources of sulfur dioxide are responsible for the growing acidity of waters hundreds of miles away.

Using trace elements, Dr. Kenneth Rahn of the University of Rhode Island has found that it is local pollution sources, mostly residual fuel oil burned for domestic, commercial, and industrial purposes in New England, that are the main cause of added acidity in rain and snow. A meteorological team from the University of Stockholm cautioned the Swedish people not to blame acid rain on emissions from England; they found that local sources accounted for local acid rain. Great Britain, incidentally, has reduced sulfur dioxide emissions by more than 30 percent since 1970 with no effect whatever on the acidity of lakes or rain in Scandinavia. In New York City, EPA scientists traced elevated sulfur dioxide and sulfuric acid in the wintertime to the burning of oil in the 35,000 oil burners of the city's apartment houses. European scientists at the Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development, in Paris, have reached the same conclusion; the most revealing result of an extensive project is that every source region affects itself more than any other region.

Effects on Man-Made Structures

The impact of air borne pollutants and acid rain on deterioration of buildings, monuments, and man-made materials is also predominantly a local phenomenon. It is at least as complex as the effects on the natural environment. And, like forests and lakes, every site is specific and every material different. Few generalizations are possible; fewer still stand up under careful scrutiny. Of course metals corrode, marble and limestone weather, masonry and concrete deteriorate, paint erodes, and so on; but the conditions and substances that lead to loss of integrity vary widely. Perhaps the only statement that can be made is that moisture is essential, that deterioration results more from acid deposition than from acid rain, and that local sources are more important than possible long-range transport of pollutants.

Yet belief persists that acid rain from "someplace else" is destroying cultural monuments. Perhaps the most egregious example is the damage to the granite Egyptian obelisk, "Cleopatra's Needle," located since 1881 in New York City's Central Park. It has been claimed that "the city's atmosphere has done more damage than three and one half millennia in the desert, and in another dozen years the hieroglyphs will probably disappear." A careful study of the monument's complex history, however, makes it clear that the damage can be attributed to advanced salt decay, the high humidity of the New York climate, and unfortunate attempts at preservation. There is no question but that acid deposition causes incremental damage to materials, but far more research is needed before reliable surface protection systems can be developed.

The decline of a forest may be part of the slow but natural process of plant succession, or it may be initiated by any of several stress-causing factors.

At the very least, the historical record of dramatic fluctuations in rain acidity, and episodes of environmental damage that cannot be attributed to industrial pollution; the evidence that natural events such as drought and abnormal cold can be important factors in environmental deterioration; the probability that compounds other than sulfur dioxide (e.g., ozone) are responsible for causing damage to plant life; the complex interactions among the many chemicals, aerosols, and other substances in the atmosphere and upon deposition; the likelihood that local sources are responsible for local effects; and the fact that there is no real, direct evidence that long distance transport of sulfur dioxide causes acid rain problems in New England, should make Congress very cautious about committing public funds to ill-conceived "solutions" to an ill-defined problem. At best, proposed federal programs constitute, in the words of Dr. S. Fred Singer of the National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmosphere, a multibillion dollar solution to a multimillion dollar problem.

One federal program that fits this description is a plan developed last summer by Drew Lewis and William Davis, special envoys for the United States and Canada, respectively. Under this plan, the U.S. will spend $2.5 billion of federal funds and $2.5 billion from U.S. industry to demonstrate how to burn high sulfur coal and release less sulfur dioxide to the atmosphere. Burning low sulfur coal was not proposed because that would "impose significant socioeconomic costs on high sulfur coal miners, their families and their communities." According to EPA administrator Lee N. Thomas, the $5 billion program will be a proper "first step toward the goal of a solution to North America's acid rain problem."[2] There is no reason to believe that the proposed solution will solve or even contribute to solving the perceived problem.

Despite reports to the contrary in the popular press, the Committee on Atmosphere and Biosphere of the National Research Council-National Academy of Sciences did *not* conclude in its 1981 report that a 50 percent reduction in sulfur dioxide from factories and utilities in the Midwest would significantly reduce environmental problems attributed to acid rain in the northeast. This misinterpretation was pointed out in the 1983 NRC-NAS report for the Environmental Studies Board, which concluded: "The relative contributions of such long range effects and of more local regional effects are currently unknown and cannot be reliably estimated using currently available models." The only change since this position was reached is the growing evidence of the past three years that local sources predominantly influence local effects.

Nevertheless, industrial activities generally and coal burning in particular put pollutants into the atmosphere, and what goes up must come down—somewhere. It is reasonable therefore to require, as the Clean Air Act does, that emissions of sulfur dioxide and other pollutants be reduced. It is also reasonable to spend federal funds to collect accurate data and to continue efforts to understand the problem of acid deposition in all its complexity. What is not reasonable is the requirement by a Congress impatient for immediate results that all coal-burning utilities must use expensive flue gas scrubbers regardless of whether the coal complies with federal standards or not. With even less reason the 1977 amendments to the Clean Air Act require that the sulfur content of all coal be reduced by the same specified percentage. It seems not to matter, under this law, that low sulfur western coal still goes into the scrubbers cleaner than high sulfur eastern coal comes out of them. What apparently does matter is that the top eight polluting states have large high sulfur coal reserves and high economic dependence on mining it. They are represented in the House of Representatives by about 105 votes. By contrast western, low sulfur coal is dominated by two states, Montana with two votes and Wyoming with one.

But even this pales to insignificance beside legislation considered by the 99th Congress, HR 4567. This bill had about 160 co-sponsors and was approved by the House Energy Subcommittee on Health and the Environment on July 20, 1986. It called for significant further reductions of sulfur dioxide emissions from utilities, industries, and motor vehicles, and nitrogen oxides were also to be reduced along with hydrocarbons, particulates, and carbon monoxide. The greatest burden would have fallen on utilities, and therefore the greatest effect would have been to drive up electricity rates. For this reason subsidies were to be provided to keep rates from rising more than 10 percent. Also proposed was a nationwide fee on all electrical generation. Department of Energy estimates put the cost of HR 4567 at a minimum of $2.5 billion to $8 billion annually. Others calculated that the costs could exceed $15 billion a year. TVA reported that the bill would drive up their electric rates by 12-14 percent, while Ohio Power's residential customers would pay 34 percent more and industry 44 percent more. The bill was opposed by the Administration, utilities, industry including coal mining, automobile manufacturers, and some members of Congress. Although the 99th Congress adjourned without taking action on this or other acid rain bills, the sponsors have vowed to try again when the new Congress convenes in January.

Department of Energy Secretary Herrington, in testimony before Congress in June 1986, pointed out (as have all responsible scientific reports) that "there is no evidence to suggest that the problem [of acid rain] is urgent or getting worse." Why then the big push to spend billions—not on research so that we may know what we're doing, but on supposed controls that no one can say will be effective? The Great Acid Rain Debate goes on . . . and on. □

[2]This statement, which appeared in the *EPA Journal* (June/July 1986), is particularly curious, since in the same article Mr. Thomas also says: ". . . it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict with any certainty to what extent acid deposition in any specific area would be reduced by emission controls on any specific sources."

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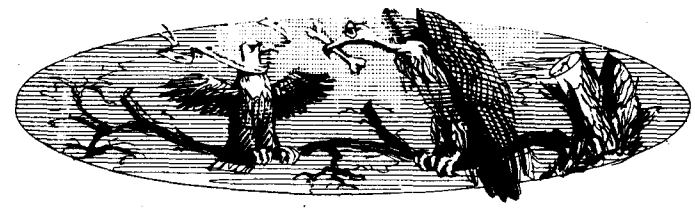
THE NATION'S PULSE



REPUBLICANS ARE STUPID

by Fred Barnes

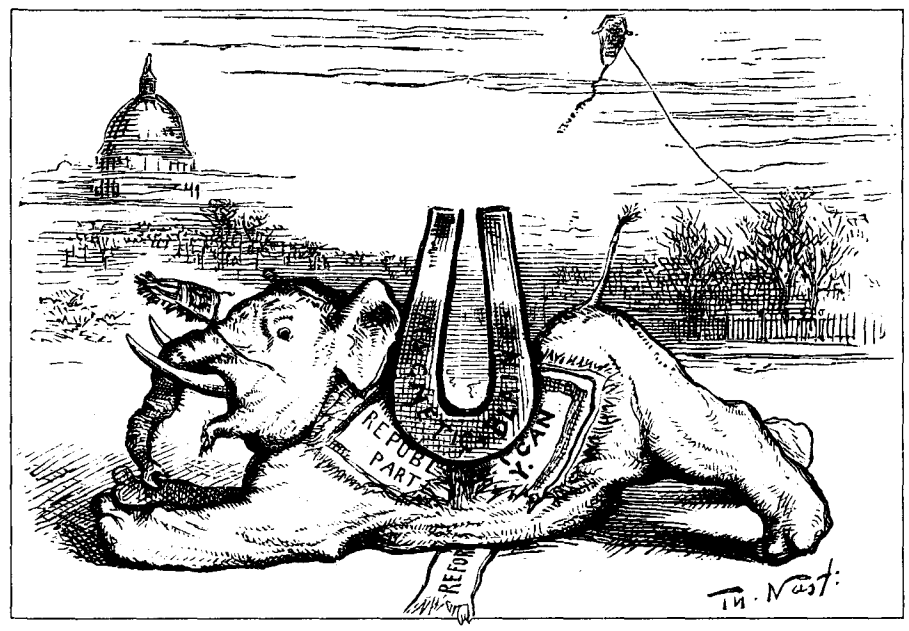
Maybe the dumbest thing said about the 1986 election was that the spate of negative ads on television turned off the voters and drove down turnout to the lowest point in four decades, a measly 37.3 percent of eligible voters. On the contrary, attack ads were practically all there was in the campaign to keep up voters' interest. Imagine how low the turnout in Wisconsin might have dipped if Republican Senator Bob Kasten hadn't gone on the air with a commercial accusing Democrat Ed Garvey of creative bookkeeping as director of the National Football League Players Association, and if Garvey hadn't fired back with an ad consisting of testimonials on his behalf by NFL veterans. The NFL dispute was certainly weightier than much of the campaign dialogue in Wisconsin, which included such bones of contention as Kasten's refusal to hold a joint press conference after a debate with Garvey, the hiring by Garveyites of a gumshoe to investigate Kasten, and Ralph Nader's heroic and high-toned entry into the campaign with the charge that Kasten, once arrested for drunk driving, needed to be "rehabilitated," not re-elected. Compared to this stuff, the thirty-second spots were downright Socratic.

The next dumbest thing said about the campaign was that it was a victory for conservatives and Republicans. True, it wasn't a big setback for the right. The new ideological baseline in American politics established by Ronald Reagan was confirmed once again in the election. America is conservative, but we knew that already. Since voters aren't veering to the left, liberals and Democrats didn't offer up a fresh vision of new spending programs (except for more costly farm subsidies) and an expanded federal government. These people are not suicidal, after all. They craved control of the Senate and did what it took to achieve that. For Republicans, the pain of losing the Senate was eased a bit by gains in governorships. Only a bit, though. In a moment of unwarranted optimism, Donald Regan, the White House chief of staff, noted that the twenty-four states with GOP governors have 270 electoral votes. Big deal. This does not assure a Republican presidential win in 1988. Democrats held the governorships in states with many more than 270 electoral votes in 1980 and 1984, and what good did it do them? Frankly, I was most impressed with the GOP's success in holding down House losses to five. Still, it's hard for Republicans to claim that the eighty-one-vote margin now held by Democrats in the House (258-177) represents a big victory for the GOP. It could have been worse, I admit, but a victory it ain't.

The sad fact of life for Republicans is that Democrats are far better at politics than they are—smarter, quicker on their feet, more flexible, more personally appealing, and I could go on. The conservative trend in America has endured for nearly two decades, and yet the party of welfarism and isolationism hasn't been driven into minority status. Why not? Democrats simply adjust well to whatever political situation faces them. They learn the correct political lessons, sometimes the hard way. Walter Mondale ran on a platform of more taxes and a bigger government in 1984, and lost ignominiously. Democrats weren't about to copy him in 1986.

They made two important decisions in 1985 that aided them immeasurably in the election. One was to give up the idea of trying to impose a tax increase on Reagan. The other was to go along with Reagan's plan for tax reform, though many Democrats had a visceral dislike for dropping the top rate on individual income to 28 percent. In passing tax reform over the objection of the corporate class, Republicans thought they were inoculating themselves against the charge that they represent big business instead of the people. But it turned out that Democrats did the inoculating, freeing themselves from the charge that they are high taxers. And tax reform, rather than being a realigning issue for Republicans, was "the dog that didn't bark" in the 1986 campaign, as Jeffrey Bell of Citizens for America has aptly put it. Look at the House race in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, where Republican Marc Holtzman spent $1 million against incumbent Democrat Paul Kanjorski. Holtzman rattled Kanjorski with a TV spot saying the congressman had backed "the Democratic tax increase of 1986." This was based on Kanjorski's vote for a budget resolution that called for unspecified new revenues. Since he'd voted for tax reform, Kanjorski had a terrific response. He aired an ad that showed both himself and Reagan, and said: Come on, Marc, the President and I were lowering tax rates in 1986, not raising them. Kanjorski won 71-29 percent.

The most resourceful Democrat of all was Terry Sanford of North Carolina. He saw what happened to James Hunt in the 1984 Senate race, namely that Senator Jesse Helms linked Hunt to the liberal leadership of the national Democratic party. Sanford campaigned *against* the national party. And when Republican James Broyhill revived the old charge that Sanford, as governor in 1961, had imposed a "food tax," Sanford had a strong comeback. He called it a "school tax," saying the money went to improve schools. He thus aligned himself with the ever-popular education reform movement. Better still, Sanford outflanked Broyhill on the supply side. He blamed Broyhill in a TV ad for having voted for "the biggest tax increase in American history" in 1982. The ad worked wonders, mainly because the charge was true. Sanford, a liberal by North Carolina standards, won, and he did it without trying to make those hardy perennials of Democratic campaigns, compassion and giveaway programs, the focal point of the election.



Republicans are stupid. They are always looking for some gimmick to help them win elections. This year, the gimmicks were coattails, technology, and two frivolous issues (drugs and terrorism). For years now, Republicans have failed to understand that it doesn't work to use motherhood issues against Democrats. Economic and national security issues often work, but it's not credible to suggest that Democrats are soft on drug traffickers and terrorists. Democrats only had to list the number of antidrug and antiterrorist bills they'd sponsored. Senator Alan Cranston of California ran an ad consisting entirely of the names of antidrug bills he'd backed. In 1970, Republicans tried the

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic.

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same tack with the motherhood issue of that era, crime. They said Democrats were soft on criminals. This flopped once Democratic candidates began presenting TV spots of themselves riding in police cars. There was a lesson for Republicans in the 1970 experience, but they didn't learn it.

Nor have their minds cleared on the subject of presidential coattails. Eisenhower didn't have them, Nixon didn't, but Republicans insisted Reagan would in 1986. For heaven's sake, why? Why would he pull Republicans through this year, when he wasn't on the ballot, after having failed to do that in 1984, when he was on the ballot? Anyone who can tie a shoe ought to be able to figure out that Reagan wouldn't be much help at midterm time. Besides, it's slightly insulting to voters to be told, as Reagan and other Republicans did, that they'd really be voting for the President one final time by backing Senator Mark Andrews of North Dakota or Ed Zschau in California, or some other Republican. Voters, who like to think they can make up their own minds, not only saw through this tackiness but prided themselves on seeing through it.

Republicans made a critical mistake in not turning the Senate races into a national referendum on Reagan's conservative policies. By failing to do so, they left many of their candidates exposed. A half-dozen or more of them had won in 1980 solely because the conservative mood, exacerbated by the Carter presidency, was at high tide. Left to their own devices, they would have lost in 1980. Left to their own devices in 1986, they did lose.

Now, I concede that it would have been difficult to nationalize the campaign even if Reagan & Co. had tried early on. Democrats weren't about to get in a fight with Reagan. After the Iceland summit, the President did seek to inject the Strategic Defense Initiative, suddenly more popular than ever, as a cutting-edge issue. It didn't cut. The reason was that Democrats simply said they were for Star Wars, too. And there wasn't enough time left before election day to force the Democrats to flesh out their position. Were they only for laboratory research, which is the Gorbachev position, or did they favor testing and deployment, the Reagan position? I suspect many of these Democrats would be willing to settle for research alone, but they weren't compelled to make this crucial distinction. Had Republicans begun earlier—last summer, say—to concentrate the campaign on Star Wars, they might have made Democrats come clean. Instead, they did too little, too late. They stressed expensive technology—taped phone messages to voters from the President, tracking polls, and so on—over issues. Someday, they'll learn that good technology can't match good issues or good candidates, and never will.

Given their thickheadedness, Republicans may fall for all the pious condemnations of negative ads and miss the real lesson of the 1986 election. No, the lesson is not that negative TV spots don't work. It's that they do, and you'd better get on the air with them fast. The most effective spots this year were Cranston's against Zschau in California. Cranston was ready the day after the June 3 primary with a commercial attacking Zschau as a flip-flopper. Had Bruce Herschensohn won the primary, Cranston was also ready with an ad attacking him. Over the summer, the Cranston ads pounded away at Zschau, and the highly vulnerable incumbent opened a wide lead. Zschau balked at going negative, but he finally relented in early September and went with attack spots. Cranston's lead began shrinking, and it continued to shrink week after week. But not enough. Everything Zschau did in the fall couldn't overcome what he hadn't done in the summer. □

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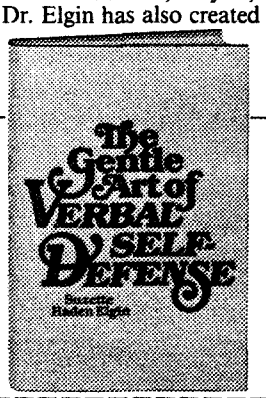
About the Author

Psycholinguist Suzette Haden Elgin has presented her innovative self-defense principles in a variety of formats. She has given workshops and seminars all over the U.S., including verbal self-defense sessions for doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. Dr. Elgin has also created a self-defense tape and a training manual for people who teach her self-defense techniques.



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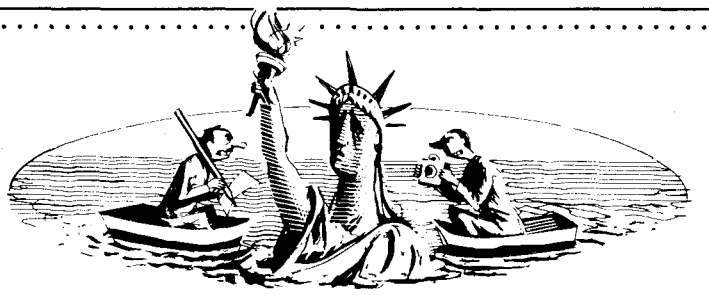

HEROES AND OBJECTS

by Michael Ledeen

Heroes of the Month:
To Jonathan Yardley for his *Washington Post* article of October 20 on Secretary of Education William Bennett. "Bennett is the best friend higher education now has in public life, because he cares so deeply about educational standards and is in a position to do something about them," Yardley writes, and then adds:

> but because he works for Ronald Reagan he is not given a chance. Bennett, like Reagan, is a buzzword: If Reagan does it, it must be wrong, and if Bennett says it, it must be wrong.

As Yardley recognizes, this is part and parcel of the growing intolerance of many of our leading universities to conservative ideas and their advocates. At the same time, American higher education is quite clearly dropping in quality, becoming more and more obsessed with money, and defaulting on the moral education of our students. Insofar as Bennett is one of the few national figures regularly to lambaste the universities for their shortcomings, he is one of the most hated men on campus.

Full marks to Jonathan Yardley for spelling it out.

To Tom Wicker, for his confession of error in the *New York Times*, entitled "Getting It Straight," in which he listed some of the egregious mistakes he had made in recent months in his *Times* column. It was an honest, good-humored admission of fallibility from which many of our overstuffed columnists could learn, and we salute Mr. Wicker for his candor and his humanity.

The Mystery of the Soviet Stockpiles
Shirley Christian broke the story in the *New York Times* several days earlier, but it remained to Joanne Omang of the *Washington Post* to put the matter into political context on October 22 (there's a lesson there: if you want information, read the *Times*, if you want to know what Washingtonians are likely to try to make of it, read the *Post*). The story was the discovery of "ten tons of arms" in Chile. These weapons and ammunition were hidden away in northern Chile, and were valued at more than $10 million.

Miss Omang pronounced that while it is clear from these discoveries that the Soviet Union and Cuba are working hard to destabilize Chile, they have now "undermined some of Pinochet's critics and strengthened his 13-year-old government, at least temporarily . . ."

This is the sort of remark that passes for wisdom at the *Post*, which is always more interested in the "who's winning, who's losing" side of things than in the significance of events. But there's a real question in there. You may recall that when Israel invaded Lebanon four long years ago, the Israelis found an enormous stockpile of weapons, far more than the PLO could possibly have used in a war against Israel. Intelligence analysts wondered why, and several answers were provided:

- Maybe it's a sign of status in the Middle East to have lots of weapons (a sort of military potlatch), so the PLO built up a treasure-trove.
- Maybe the PLO were offered lots and lots of weapons, and couldn't say no (unlikely, to be sure, since they seem to have paid for their weapons).
- Maybe it's part of a Soviet plan of advance stockpiling of weapons in various theatres around the world, in the event they or their surrogates have to fight a major engagement.

The same questions can be raised about the Chilean case. Why so very many weapons and shells and mortars? For whom were they intended? I don't know the answer, but it's a great question that deserves serious consideration.

Who is the Mysterious Mr. Shevardnadze?
The new batch of Soviet leaders is getting a good press in these parts, but one could hope for a bit more information about them. You might have thought our journalists would learn from their shortcomings during the Andropov affair, when they waxed rhapsodic about the "moderation" of the former KGB chief, crediting him with a taste for White Horse Scotch and American jazz, fluency in English, and closet liberalism. Overlooked in the general rush to praise the new dictator was his background as butcher of Budapest. Similar oversights are with us today, most notably in the case of the new Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze. Comrade Shevardnadze was Minister of the Department of the Interior from 1965-1972, and then sent to become First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Georgia. In both capacities he was in charge of "anti-corruption" campaigns, the sort of thing that Gorbachev is waging nowadays, and for which he is receiving near-universal praise.

You will not read much about Shevardnadze's anti-corruption campaign in Georgia if you stick to the American press; in order to get decent details, it's necessary to lay your hands on *samizdat* publications. I have found a particularly interesting one, consisting of the signed confession of Yuri Tsirekidze, who was convicted in April 1973 of "extensive bodily injury leading to fatal consequences" and "refusing help to a suffering person." These criminal acts were carried out in the Investigatory Detention Center in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Tsirekidze's actions were part of a vast purge carried out under the supervision of Shevardnadze: in the two years preceding the trial of Tsirekidze, some 25,000 persons were arrested in Georgia, of whom 9,500 were Party members, and 7,000 were members of the youth organization, the Komsomol. It's almost impossible to describe the confession, so I will provide lengthy excerpts. The translation was done by Soviet émigrés living in New York City. I am grateful to Yuri Yarim-Agaev, executive director of the Center for Democracy in New York, for his help in ob-

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taining this rare insight into the biography of the Soviet foreign minister:

I was sick of the agents, they made all sorts of demands and conditions and forced me to work as an agent. *If you refuse to work for them, they will expose you as an agent so you have to work for them, or danger threatens.* I worked in prison and in labor colonies and helped them in undercover work . . .

After being arrested on July 20, 1970, I was transferred to the KPZ (preliminary findings room). In 24 hours I was transferred to the SIZO #1. I was placed in Special Building #2, room #43.

. . . Special Building #2, which is isolated from all other sections of the prison, was established in 1966 and was designated solely for undercover work. The old section was re-equipped and 10 rooms were opened with all kinds of equipment for broadcasts and recordings. In this building only agents or objects who had been processed with the help of agents were placed. The rooms were not communal, they were for only 5-7 people. No one else was placed in this building . . .

In room #45 Agdgomelashvili (an agent) beat Mikhelashvili (a Jew) on assignment from Panfilov (chief of operations), in room #44 agents . . . beat and cut with a razor the object Datusani, in room #37 agent Usupyan on assignment from Panfilov and Svimonishvili beat the object Valeri Kukhianidze, whose internal organs got so beat up that he spit blood, after which he died in the Central Prison Hospital and was "written off."

The agents Gurami Gogua and Tedo Dolidze were beating the object in room #38, including Kobakhidze, who had his legs strung up until they wrung a confession out of him. . . . In every room sat agents who worked with an object on a corresponding assignment for which they gave out narcotics, alcohol, allowed meetings with and packages from relatives and even visits with prostitutes—all of which was illegal in the special rooms and offices—they promised freedom, etc.

They were often given the assignments to beat objects such as for the purpose of extracting a confession, but also due to the personal interest of the administrators. . . . In a word, beating went on in all the rooms, and the groaning and howling of the objects was heard all over the building. . . . In general, it was a slaughterhouse.

On orders of the procurator Lezhava and his brother (head of SIZO #1) and on assignment from E. Shevardnadze, I was told, the object Roman Enukidze was sent to me. He was in a group . . . of the Bureau of Land for Gardening . . . Lezhava, Svimonishvili and others promised me that if I handled this case they would free me, since Shevardnadze himself had given his word.

I processed the object Enukidze, I put all my energy into it. He had been under observation before. I put him in touch with his home and convinced him of everything. I made him confess, as I had made Doloyan and Botadze, to the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Georgian SSR.

Well, you get the idea. As the *samizdat* editor concluded, "the widespread use of torture . . . coincides with the term of Shevardnadze as Minister of the Department of the Interior and First Secretary of the Central Committee." It was Shevardnadze who created the Special Building #2, where torture went on almost uninterruptedly, under cover of an anti-corruption campaign.

As for the unfortunate Tsirekidze, he was of course the fall guy for the KGB and MVD officials who ordered him to carry out his acts of brutality and torture. And one of those officials was eventually promoted to stand alongside the moderate and progressive Gorbachev as a representative of the new peace policy of the Soviet Union.

If you want more of the real biography of the Soviet foreign minister, talk to the Georgian community in exile in Queens, New York City. Better yet, write to your local paper and ask that one of their ace investigative journalists be put on this story. □

EUROPEAN DOCUMENT

AIDS: A BRITISH VIEW

by Christopher Monckton

The responses of governments and public agencies to the threat to mankind from the rapid spread of AIDS and its related diseases have been dangerously and perhaps fatally inadequate. On the one hand, they want to prevent the disease from becoming one of the biggest killers man has known. On the other, they are over-anxious to avoid offending high-risk groups or arousing unreasonable discrimination against known carriers of the disease. They are allowing an understandable sensitivity to the rights and feelings of minorities to outweigh their higher duty to protect the lives of all their citizens.

The authorities in some countries in Africa (where the very high infection rate leads many to believe the disease may have originated) are now refusing to report AIDS cases to the World Health Organization, which now has a small, under-funded but growing program to combat the disease internationally. These irresponsible attempts at concealment will obviously make the task of worldwide eradication of the virus even harder than it already is.

In the United States Dr. Everett Koop, the Surgeon-General, has recently issued a 36-page report advocating the stepping-up of public education on the dangers of transmitting AIDS through promiscuity (heterosexual as well as homosexual) and through the re-use by intravenous drug addicts of possibly infected hypodermic needles. Privately he admits that, if his campaigns against smoking, drink, and drugs have made little impact, a campaign to change people's sexual behavior will have still less chance of success.

At the end of October a committee of the National Academy of Sciences produced a 390-page report entitled *Confronting AIDS*,[1] describing federal anti-AIDS funding as woefully inadequate and calling for a $2 billion annual program of public education and research on the disease in the hope of finding a vaccine against it. Yet the report concedes that there is little chance of finding a cure in the short term.

Both these reports continue a welcome trend among official announcements about AIDS away from earlier misplaced and complacent attempts at reassurance and towards a more honest exposition of the full facts. *Confronting AIDS*, for instance, bluntly states: "There is no agent currently available to treat the underlying disease process, no one has been known to recover from AIDS, and those exposed to the virus

Christopher Monckton, a former special adviser to Margaret Thatcher, is assistant editor of the British national daily newspaper Today.

[1]National Academy Press, $24.95.

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must be presumed to be chronically infectious."

Yet both reports fail to draw the unwelcome but undeniable conclusion from the disquieting evidence which they present. For there i only one way to stop AIDS. That is to screen the entire population regularly and to quarantine all carriers of the disease for life to halt the transmission of the disease to those who are uninfected. Every member of the population should be blood-tested every month to detect the presence of antibodies against the disease, and all those found to be infected with the virus, even if only as carriers, should be isolated compulsorily, immediately, and permanently.

Any program of action as radical, as costly, as universal, and as undeniably contrary to individual liberties as this appears to be unthinkable, which is why too few of the people who ought to have thought about it have done more than to dismiss it as impossible, unethical, unfair, discriminatory, or undemocratic. Yet there are occasions when it is imperative to think the unthinkable and then to do the undoable. The AIDS epidemic is one such occasion.

To justify a program of universal blood-testing and enforced isolation, it is first necessary to establish that there is no alternative. By now it is clear that the AIDS virus will not go away by itself. The great plagues of history were eventually extinguished partly because the victims were killed so quickly that the diseases could not transmit themselves to new hosts, and partly because immunities to them began to arise. AIDS, however, lingers as a carrier for years before killing its victims, allowing plenty of time for onward transmission, and it assails the very immune system (specifically the T-lymphocyte white cells) that might otherwise develop the power to destroy it. In these respects, AIDS is more threatening than any plague which has previously afflicted mankind.

There are only two ways of eradicating a disease like AIDS. One is to cure it; the other is to isolate it. What, then, is the prospect of a cure? All responsible medical authorities are agreed that the likelihood of early discovery of a cure is remote. *Confronting AIDS* says: "The Committee believes that a vaccine against HIV infection is not likely to be available for at least five years and probably longer." A palliative drug, azidothymidine (AZT), appears promising as a way of deferring the death of AIDS victims by slowing the progress of the disease in the body, but its side-effects have not yet been fully investigated and it will not, in any event, prevent the spread of the disease.

The problem with the AIDS virus is that, like the influenza virus, it changes its form so fast that the body's immune system cannot keep up. It will probably be harder to find a cure for AIDS than for the influenza virus, for which—despite decades of research—no satisfactory or general cure has been found. To take another example, the anti-viral agent against the Hepatitis B virus took seventeen years to develop, and is still not universally available.

Public health authorities would, therefore, be highly irresponsible if they based their policies for controlling the AIDS epidemic on the wishful assumption that a cure might shortly be found. Though the disease has been known only since 1981, and the virus itself was isolated as recently as 1983, early predictions of the current death-rate have proved to be underestimated, if anything, and present predictions are that the annual death rate from AIDS in the United States alone will be 54,000 by 1991, and continuing to rise sharply every year thereafter unless a cure is discovered, tested, approved, and made generally available.

Will the public health authorities' current response—a program of public education about the dangers of spreading the virus through homosexual or heterosexual promiscuity or re-use of infected needles—be enough to achieve a *de facto* isolation of carriers, and hence a decline in the rate at which the disease spreads, without the need for enforcement measures? Alarmingly, no. The homosexual community, for instance, is the group with the highest risk of contracting AIDS. About two-thirds of all AIDS cases in the United States are among homosexuals. The high risk arises both because homosexuals are, on average, extremely promiscuous and because the forms of sexual activity in which they indulge are particularly favorable to the physical contact between infected body-fluid and an uninfected bloodstream by which the disease is typically transmitted.

In many homosexual communities, the rate of promiscuity has dropped considerably in response to growing public awareness of the danger of contracting AIDS. Yet the rate of infection has not dropped, because increasing numbers of homosexuals are already infected and the higher percentage of existing infection tends to cancel out what would otherwise be the beneficial effects of the decline in promiscuity. Unless promiscuity between infected and uninfected people drops to nil, the disease will continue to spread at approximately its present rate.

Hence, even where sexual behavior becomes less promiscuous, the advance of the disease appears inexorable. In any given population, the measured incidences of infection, of disease, and of death double approximately every ten months. Some slowing of this rate of increase can be hoped for once the disease has reached saturation among the high-risk groups (homosexuals, intravenous drug addicts re-using infected needles, prostitutes and their clients, other heterosexually promiscuous people, hemophiliacs using infected clotting agents, transfusees receiving blood from infected donors, spouses of carriers and children of infected mothers). But unfortunately the disease is not confined solely to these high-risk groups.

As the incidence of AIDS increases, the likelihood of accidental infection of

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ieoretically low-risk members of the opulation also increases. The reason . that, because AIDS is transmitted by ontamination of the victim's bloodtream through direct contact with ›ody fluids from a carrier, infection an occur in many innocent and ac·idental ways: for instance, through ·ven a very small cut in the skin, or (in ›ne case on record in Germany) by an nfected boy biting his previously uninfected twin brother.

It may well be that many people not in the high-risk groups have already become infected without knowing it. One of the reasons why universal testing is essential is that it is the only reliable way to detect such accidental infections. It would, in any event, be thought invidious and discriminatory to limit the testing only to high-risk groups; but, more to the point, it would also be a failure.

The truth, though the public health authorities are not quite admitting it yet, is that everybody, without exception, is potentially in danger of infection by the AIDS virus. Of course, homosexuals and intravenous drug users remain most acutely at risk, but in Africa it is already true that half of all AIDS cases are women (compared with under one-tenth in the United States), indicating that heterosexual transmission of the disease is now as significant as homosexual transmission. Although this figure may be explained in part by the frequent re-use of hypodermic needles in African medicine, or by the high prostitution rate in some countries, public health authorities in the developed world would be imprudent if they did not take stringent and immediate precautions against accidental infection of groups not now regarded as being at risk. The more widespread the disease, the greater the danger that members of low-risk groups may be accidentally infected by an existing carrier. Furthermore, it is obvious that the risk of infection by accident is higher still if the carrier himself does not know that he has the disease.

Would compulsory testing and enforced isolation work? If the vast majority of the population came to accept the need for it and were willing to cooperate, yes. The testing would have to be monthly because after the moment of infection there is a "window of apparent safety," varying in length from two weeks to three months, during which the victim shows no antibodies. A single test might, therefore, turn out falsely negative and a carrier might subsequently spread the disease to others without knowing it.

Equally, a test might show falsely positive. Accordingly, everyone who showed positive on any monthly test should have the right to undergo immediate further tests to establish whether the initial reading was wrong. Fortunately, many different tests are available, so if one test proved positive others could at once be tried. During the few hours necessary for awaiting the results of the further tests, the testee would need to be isolated both from the infected and from the uninfected populations.

Strict controls would be needed at all borders. Visitors would be required to take blood-tests at the port of entry and would be quarantined in the immigration building until the tests had proved negative. Already the first tentative steps are being taken in this direction: some countries now deny the right of entry to known carriers of AIDS.

Many blood-tests for AIDS are now known, including enzyme-linked immuno-sorbent assays, immunofluorescent assays, and Western blot analysis. Most of these techniques are quick, painless, and inexpensive and all are accurate to a respectably high degree.

Universal testing, then, provided that it were regular, would successfully identify all—or nearly all—carriers. Some actual or potential carriers, particularly among the high-risk groups, might be

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driven "underground" by fear of being identified and isolated: but the risk to the population from these few would be considerably smaller than the present risk from those who are spreading the disease because they are not known to be carriers. Regular testing would greatly curtail the damage done by those carriers who remained at large.

Though the cost of universal testing would be great, the health-care cost of allowing the infection to spread unchecked would be many times greater. *Confronting AIDS* puts the cost of treating an AIDS victim at $50,000 to $150,000 from diagnosis to death. By 1991, the annual cost of caring for sufferers from the disease has been put at a conservative $16 billion. A lot of testing could be done for the same outlay.

Would isolation be effective? Yes, and here is the one ray of light in an otherwise gloomy tale. Precisely because AIDS is not normally transmissible except by the direct mingling of a carrier's body fluids with the bloodstream of an uninfected person, isolation would immediately protect the uninfected population to an extent greater than with most other communicable diseases: and, even if uninfected people wished to visit or care for friends or relatives in the infected and accordingly isolated community, they could do so without risk provided that stringent precautions against accident were taken.

Isolation of AIDS carriers need not, therefore, be as terrible in practice as it sounds in theory, and it need not be as rigorous as the isolation which was once necessary for more readily communicable diseases such as smallpox or typhoid. Carriers need not be isolated from each other; the bulk of them, at any given time, would not be suffering from any symptoms of the disease; and carefully supervised visits from uninfected people would be possible.

In the United States, between 1.5 and 3 million people are already carriers of AIDS. Isolation of so large a number of people would be an enormous and daunting task, though not altogether impossible. However, it is unlikely that a society which has been habituated to freedom since its foundation would yet be willing to accept the alternative to widespread death which isolation would offer.

Mr. Lyndon LaRouche's Proposition 64, which advocated widespread screening and isolation of AIDS carriers, was heavily defeated on the California ballot, partly because the proposition was proposed by political extremists with a known propensity to cry wolf and supported by documentation that was unconvincing, poorly argued, and hysterical in tone, and partly because the public has not yet realized just how dangerous AIDS really is. Mentions of the disease still provoke more jokes and laughter than serious consideration of its ultimate effects on the human population.

In Britain, my own country, only 30,000 carriers are known. Isolation of this comparatively small number would not be insuperably difficult. But Britain will probably not take any radical action yet. Herein lies the real dilemma for public health authorities. While the disease is in the early stages of its penetration into the population, when stopping it would be easiest, few will appreciate its dangers and the public will to take drastic measures will be absent. By the time the catastrophic consequences of the epidemic have become evident to all, and the will to eradicate the disease has grown strong enough to permit action, much of the fatal damage has been done and the numbers of carriers to be isolated will be very high.

In five years' time, public perceptions of the danger posed by AIDS will be transformed. By then, on the official figures, the cumulative total of AIDS cases will have risen to 270,000, of whom 179,000 will have died. New AIDS cases arising from heterosexual contact will have risen fivefold from their present levels and pediatric cases tenfold. And, though the vast majority of cases will still be coming from the high-risk groups, cases arising in low-risk groups from accidental infection will begin to become significant.

Although the idea of universal testing and isolation now sounds extravagant and preposterous, it will eventually happen. Unless governments act now, the people will begin to take matters into their own hands: uninfected communities, for instance, will set up their own testing stations and will try to keep carriers out of town. Already, AIDS carriers in schools and workplaces have begun to face discrimination. Universal testing would be antidiscriminatory and, above all, it would save the lives of those who are going to be needlessly killed because governments have not the courage to do now what they are, in the end, going to do anyway. □

The founder and editor-in-chief of *The American Spectator* examines what he believes are the frequently incoherent, often infantile (and nearly always dangerous) ideas of the New Age Liberals in **The Liberal Crack-Up.**

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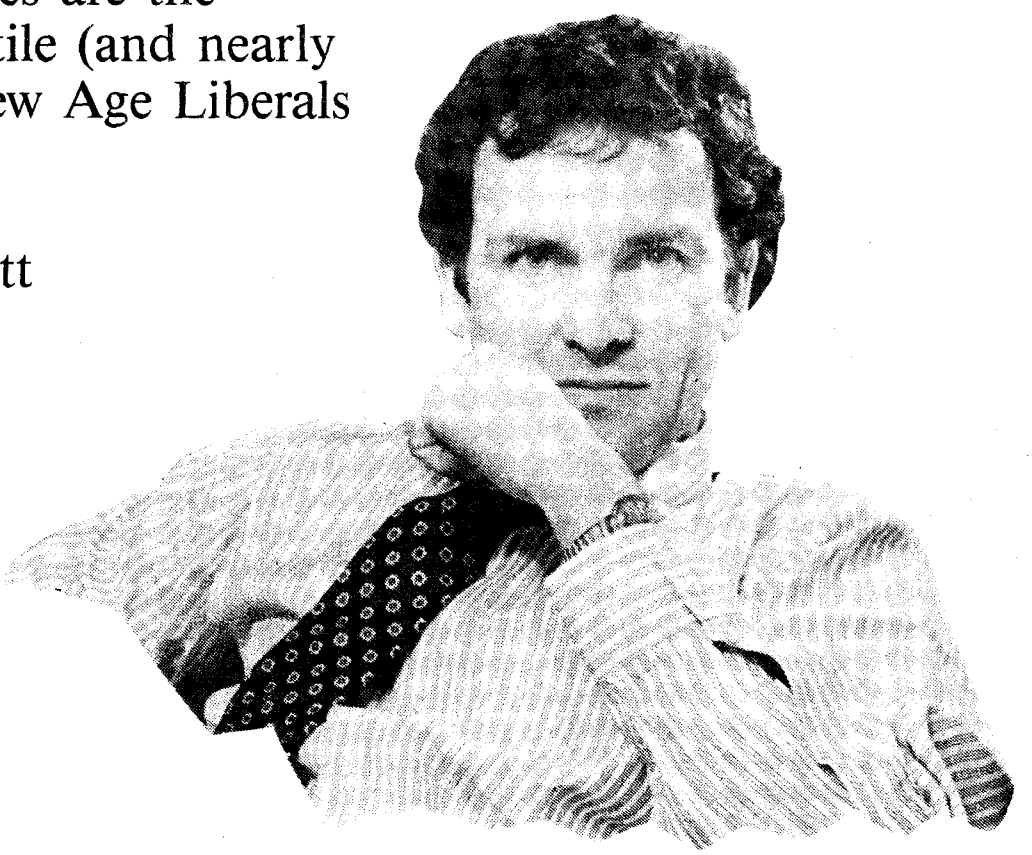

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THE TALKIES

PAST AND PRESENT

by Bruce Bawer

Something Wild is a contemptible film, and the obtuse reviewers who have hailed it unequivocally as a delightfully wacky comedy—a "wonderful offbeat movie," as one of them put it—are contemptible too. Our would-be hero is Charlie Driggs (Jeff Daniels), a Yuppie nerd who, in the film's opening sequence, establishes his sterling character by pocketing his check in a SoHo coffee shop and sneaking out without paying—just for kicks, you understand; our would-be heroine is Lulu (Melanie Griffith), a zanily dressed counterculture cutie who, intrigued by Charlie's crime, follows him out of the coffee shop. "You're a closet rebel, aren't you?" she coos admiringly, clearly recognizing that the two of them are soulmates. Offering him a lift to his Manhattan office, Lulu drives him instead to New Jersey, guzzling scotch all the way, throwing his beeper out the car window, and stopping in a liquor store to rifle the cash register.

At first Charlie protests Lulu's high-handedness. He's got to get back to work, he tells her; he's just been promoted to v.p. But before long he's swilling scotch with her as they speed down the New Jersey Turnpike and admitting that, by golly, he *is* a rebel ("but I channel it into the mainstream"). And before you know it they're in a roadside motel having a lusty bit of afternoon delight—complete with handcuffs and black stockings and (to Charlie's horror) a phone call to his boss *in medias res*. That done, they leave Lulu's car behind (it's hot, naturally), buy another, and hie it to Pennsylvania, picking up along the way a carful of hitchhikers—a poor black family, a hippie type with a guitar, et al. Why the hitchhikers? The idea here is plainly that Lulu (who defends her crimes by speaking of "equal distribution of assets") is introducing Charlie, the naive corporate lackey, to The People—and to The Open Road, as well. (One is reminded that the film's director, Jonathan Demme, is also responsible for *Melvin and Howard*, another quirky picture about a have and a have-not together on the American road.)

In Pennsylvania, Lulu (whose real name, it turns out, is Audrey) takes Charlie home to her gentle, harpsichord-playing mother, and introduces him as her husband; when he carries the act off with aplomb (though her weirdly serene mother, Peaches, is not deceived), she's impressed: "You're a pretty good liar when you wanna be, Charlie." (It is good to be a good liar.) She then puts on a sweet little white dress and takes Charlie, still posing as her spouse, to her high-school reunion.

It is at the reunion—where they run into her psychotic ex-con husband, Ray Sinclair (Ray Liotta)—that the film radically shifts gears. Suddenly Audrey's and Charlie's adorable, harmless crimes give way to Ray's violent ones. He takes them to a convenience store where he knocks the counterman unconscious and empties the cash register. He then forces Audrey to accompany him to Virginia; Charlie (who, we are supposed to believe, has come to care for Audrey) trails them covertly and steals her back. Next thing you know they are all back in New York, where, after a few minutes of grisly violence, Ray is killed and Charlie—having "seen the other half" of himself and decided to throw over his "boring but very safe life"—quits his job. And just as one expected, the denouement takes place in the SoHo coffee shop where it all began.

Something Wild is a screwball comedy, but it is also clearly trying to be something else, to make some kind of statement about Yuppies and rebels. This is not an impossible task; a couple of years ago, after all, Martin Scorcese took the same basic premise—Yuppie boy meets counterculture girl—and came up with *After Hours*, a witty, perceptive, gorgeously constructed Kafkaesque comedy that had something truly original and thought-provoking to say about life in the age of condos, computers, and Commie chic. In his cheap and puerile way, Demme too wants to make a serious statement along these lines while being funny at the same time. Near the end of the film, accordingly, Charlie makes a remark that sounds an awful lot as if it is meant to be taken as the film's moral (it appears earlier in the film, too): "It's better to be a live dog than a dead lion."

What are we to make of this? Does "lion" mean rebel and "dog" mean wage slave? Is Ray thus the "dead lion"—which, at least compared to a "dog," sounds rather heroic and

Bruce Bawer, a regular contributor to the New Criterion, *is* The American Spectator*'s movie critic.*

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romantic? Does the film mean to suggest, therefore, that Ray is some kind of tragic hero, a guy with the right idea who maybe went a little too far? Perhaps. But perhaps not: it's my genuine impression that Demme and his screenwriter, E. Max Frye, are not absolutely certain *what* they mean to suggest. Their principal purpose seems to be to establish their political correctness (i.e., leftism).

This would explain why, in one scene, Demme puts a book about Winnie Mandela in Audrey's hands. Whatever one thinks of Winnie Mandela, there's something very offensive about this sort of facile political gesturing, this distribution of Consciousness McNuggets. Besides, as a statement of political solidarity with the Mandelas, putting that book in Audrey's hands hardly makes sense: would an intelligent pro-Mandela filmmaker want even to *hint* at an equation between the Mandelas and the reckless, selfish pair of "rebels" in this movie? That this is a screwball comedy by no means excuses such frivolous and muddleheaded moral logic. (Demme and Frye don't seem to realize that in a screwball comedy, it's just the *characters* who should be screwballs, not the writer and director too.)

Patently, Demme and Frye idealize rebellion. But rebellion, to them, has no moral dimension, has nothing to do with self-sacrifice or commitment to a principle, with the right challenging the power of the wrong. Their sensibilities are so fundamentally immature and solipsistic that the only conception that they have of their theme is as follows: Being a rebel is fun. Being a rebel means not going to work, means stiffing a coffee shop on a check, means getting a free ride. The definition, needless to say, has its corollaries: Stealing and lying and drinking behind the wheel are really neat (so long as you don't physically hurt anybody); the road to happiness is paved with irresponsibility; the worst thing you can do with your life is to hold down a job, especially a *good* job. It disturbs me profoundly to think of the number of children and teenagers who will be exposed to this movie, and of the number of reviewers who have blithely praised its madcap comedy while managing thoroughly to ignore its moral scuzziness.

A class reunion and an estranged husband also figure prominently in *Peggy Sue Got Married.* The title character, played charmingly by Kathleen Turner, is so nostalgic for her high school days, when she was homecoming queen and life was full of promise, that she attends her Class of '60 reunion in her prom dress. There she sees Charlie (Nicolas Cage), her failure of a hubby, once the class hotshot, with his new lady friend, and Richard, the onetime class nerd who is now a big success. Clearly, Peggy Sue is under great tension—and the tension becomes so acute, when she and Richard are called onstage to be named queen and king of the reunion, that she passes out. And when she awakens, she's back in high school. It's 1960 again, and everything is as it was —except she's got the mind and the memories of a forty-something-year-old woman who's already lived through the sixties, seventies, and half of the eighties. The ensuing scenes are both funny and touching: she laughs hysterically when her proud father shows the family his new car—an Edsel—and is moved to tears when she finds herself speaking on the phone with her grandmother, who died before 1986.

But the movie proves to be something other than the sentimental journey into the past that its first few minutes might suggest. As the story develops, director Francis Ford Coppola initiates potentially affecting sequences only to slice through the sentiment, time and again, with some pointed piece of absurdity. Why? Because the idea of time travel—specifically, the idea of being able to go back and do it *right* this time around, which is what Peggy Sue proclaims her intention of doing—is itself absurd. You get to where you are, the film is saying, not by waking up and finding yourself there, but by living your way there, day by day. Back in 1960, when Peggy Sue describes to Richard the glorious technological triumphs of the next quarter-century, he replies, "The future is so exciting!" But the film's message is that "the future," as such, doesn't really exist; when it arrives it will be the present, and will not be "exciting" in any simple way, but will be, rather, an ambiguous mixture of pleasures and disappointments and regrets, for which technological triumphs and such will merely provide a context.

Just as it seeks to demystify the future, the film deromanticizes the past. One of the things that Peggy Sue comes to learn is that she was mistaken to think that life, back in high school, had offered her an infinite number of choices. It didn't, according to the guiding philosophy of this film, for life has brought Peggy Sue to where she is now, and was never going to take her anywhere else. The film echoes *It's a Wonderful Life* in a couple of respects (for example, the inscribed book at the end), but the message that Peggy Sue—and all of us—are meant to receive is not that our lives are necessarily wonderful, but that, whatever our lives have been, they couldn't have happened any other way, simply because they *didn't* happen any other way.

The film, in short, takes on the theme of fate vs. free will and comes down strongly on the side of fate. But it's not darkly or nihilistically fatalistic, as one might expect from Coppola. On the contrary, it's a film in which the heroine learns to live in the present, not in the past or the future; learns the proper relation between the person she was and the person she is now. She learns, in short, to accept her life because it is, simply enough, all hers; she has created it; character is fate. To be sure, the film has its weak points. For one thing, it's hard to understand Peggy Sue's attraction to the nauseating Charlie (if only Coppola would stop hiring relatives!); for another, a deliberately absurd sequence that takes place at Peggy Sue's grandfather's lodge is so bizarre that it all but throws the picture off kilter. On the whole, however, this is an extremely admirable piece of work—not the major artistic accomplishment that many might expect from Coppola, but clever and thoughtful nonetheless.

If you like Caravaggio, you'll hate *Caravaggio.* Derek Jarman both wrote and directed this British film, which purports to be about the life of the Italian painter Michelangelo Amerighi da Caravaggio (1573-1610). The film has received considerable acclaim for its profusion of deliberate anachronisms, the number of which increases exponentially as the film proceeds. Caravaggio the boy (a tough, unlovable urchin) enjoins someone to speak "in plain English"; Vatican officials use pocket calculators and Royal typewriters and read the art magazine *FMR*; by film's end virtually everyone has traded period garb for twentieth-century shirts and trousers. Caravaggio and most of his lowlife cronies speak in pronounced Cockney accents, and their grubby communal way of life suggests not Rome during the Renaissance but the East End of London in 1986.

Why all the anachronisms? An article in *Art News*, based in part upon interviews with Jarman, tells us that he meant, by them, to give us all an idea of how radical Caravaggio's paintings would have seemed to his contemporaries. But the anachronisms hardly have this effect—after all, Caravaggio isn't the only one in the film with whom they are associated. My own impression, while watching the film, was that Jarman was playing with the popular image of "Caravaggio our contemporary." As James Gardner put it in the June 1985 *Commentary*, "To a degree unparalleled in the Old Master tradition, Caravaggio would appear to have preserved through four centuries the power to awaken in us the kind of interest that we can ordinarily summon only in respect to our contemporaries. To some he would even seem an emissary of our times sent back into the benighted years of Counter-Reformation Europe. . . ."

But, far from making it easier to identify with Caravaggio, Jarman's anachronistic touches keep the real Caravaggio perpetually at a distance.

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They come across as pretentious and self-indulgent, even flippant: one approaches this film wanting to become immersed in Caravaggio's life and art and time, but Jarman keeps shoving a string of electric light bulbs or a motorcycle or truck in the way. This mindless, Peter Sellars-type nonsense is so frustrating—and, ultimately, so predictable and boring—that before long one finds oneself eyeing the exit, glancing at one's watch, and echoing the exasperated words of Rex Harrison's Pope Julius II to Charlton Heston's Michelangelo Buonnaroti, as he labored on the Sistine ceiling in *The Agony and the Ecstasy*: "When will you make an *end* of it?"

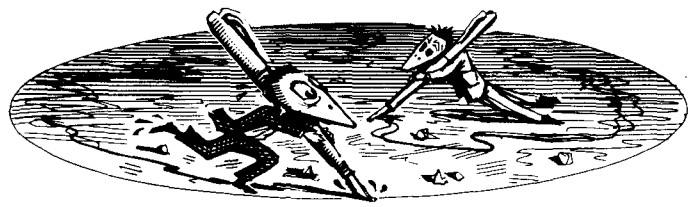
Clearly, Jarman's major aim in *Caravaggio* was to avoid making a film like *The Agony and the Ecstasy*—that is, a conventional movie biography with a plot, some sign of an attempt at period authenticity, and a deferential tone toward its subject. Rejecting convention is fine if you've come up with something better—but Jarman hasn't. He doesn't seem to understand that the main reason we are interested in the life of a great artist is that we want to know how this particular person, in this particular time and place, came to create these particular immortal works. What forces shaped him? How did he discover his Muse? Jarman gives no indication of having the slightest interest in such questions. He doesn't even seem to be especially interested in Caravaggio's art.

What Jarman *is* interested in, however, is sex. If *The Agony and the Ecstasy* skirted Michelangelo Buonnaroti's homosexuality, Jarman seems to have chosen to take on the life of Michelangelo Caravaggio (who is widely thought to have been, like his namesake, a homosexual) because it offered him the opportunity to invent a story of two men's sadomasochistic passion for one another. Caravaggio (Nigel Terry) is one of the men; the other is a handsome tough named Ranuccio (Sean Bean). The film, for the most part, is concerned with chronicling the development of, and the complications that arise from, their violent mutual attraction (which, by the way, is more convincingly acted by Terry than by Bean).

And it tells this unpretty story with less and less clarity: while the inane anachronisms multiply, the plot spirals off into almost complete incoherence. Twice near the end, groups of characters fall into dramatically lit Caravaggio-type poses, in what comes off as a joke at Caravaggio's expense, an implicit suggestion that his work is artificial, that art—of Caravaggio's old-fashioned type, at least—can't really hope to capture reality. (Which, I suppose, is why Jarman, the film artist, doesn't consider it worth his trouble to try to comprehend the sensibility of the age in which Caravaggio lived—though I suspect that we are meant to feel that *Caravaggio*, with its graphic bloodspilling and overt sexuality, brings us closer to "reality" than does Caravaggio.) As Jarman's Caravaggio says, "All art is against lived experience. How can you compare flesh and blood with oil, ground pigment?"

Of course, he's right. Capturing life perfectly *is* impossible. The obligation of every artist, however, is to attempt nonetheless to capture it as richly and accurately as he can—not to make a joke out of everything, not to abandon the rigor and self-discipline that are necessary to any sort of artistic success. In this regard, Derek Jarman's *Caravaggio* fails miserably. □

AMONG THE INTELLECTUALOIDS



ATWOOD AT WORK

by Richard T. Marin

Almost a year ago Margaret Atwood's novel *The Handmaid's Tale* made an inky splash on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review*. A sign, clear as a highland tattoo, that she has made it in the world of Big Publishing. Like fellow Canadians Mordecai Richler, Alice Munro, and more recently Robertson Davies, she has *arrived* in New York City—home of big newspapers, big money, and all the fruits of Yankee capitalism that Canadians so love to despise. Now that Atwood has published another book, *Bluebeard's Egg and Other Stories*,[1] American readers will want to know, Who is this woman from the North? Why are people buying her books and why are so many critics fawning and scraping in the presence of her fiction?

What exactly is Margaret Atwood on about?

First a colony proudly singing "God Save the Queen" in its classrooms and legislatures, then a victim of television imperialism, Canada has always swooned weakly under the intoxicating iconography of some other more flamboyant power. Once it was Britain, now the United States. The problem of discovering a true "Canadian Identity" has gnawed at Canadian literature since it emerged from the cloud of bad Romantic poetry that filled anthologies well into the early part of this century. It was then that the grumbling, the disaffected moaning (often attributed to the influence of T. S. Eliot) began. Newly angst-ridden poets decried their native land as "a highschool land/deadset in adolescence" (Earl Birney), inhabited by "a dull people" (Irving Layton), and led by "second rate/sons of bitches" (Raymond Souster). A mood of reverse nationalism gripped the land. But it was nationalism nonetheless. And it came to a head in the 1960s, when writers, critics, even the government joined in a massive enterprise of cultural onanism: Canadian art, bad or good, was declared the new God. Margaret Atwood would be its high priestess.

Atwood's literary career, as she describes it, began early in the pre-teen years. She wrote poetry, which, she said in an interview, "all reads like Wordsworth and Lord Byron." (Pity it hasn't been collected.) Jump from juvenalia to college days at the University of Toronto. There we find her contributing to indigenous literary magazines, collaborating with Dennis Lee (now a famous gnome-like Canadian poet) under the pseudonym "Shakesbeat Latweed"—a moniker that must

[1]Houghton Mifflin, $16.95.

Richard T. Marin is a writer living in New York.

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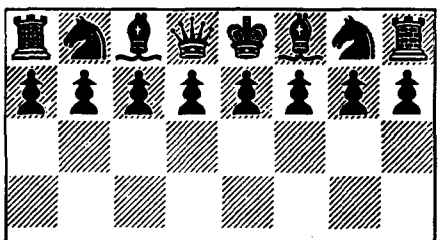

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have seemed "hep" at the time. Wisely, she shed the black-beret image, and in 1966 published her first book of poetry, *The Circle Game*, which scored her the coveted Governor General's Award. Atwood's star was in rapid ascendant.

From 1969 to 1981 she published five novels. Still in her thirties, she was hailed as the "queen bee" of Canadian letters and was doted upon by a host of academic drones. The titles of her novels quickly reveal what "the queen" was up to during that heady decade. *Life Before Man, Lady Oracle, Bodily Harm*—these were not manuals for the Total Woman, but trenchant feminist tracts, fitted to an era of charred brassieres and unshorn legs. Blurbs on an early paperback edition of her most highly acclaimed novel, *Surfacing* (published in 1972), pronounced it "the most shattering novel a woman ever wrote," "a woman's novel," and "a novel of woman's self-discovery." Yes, she wrote about women. Specifically, women as victims—a theme that was to become her obsession.

Atwood's mordant, laconic poetry—always much better than her prose—was equally redolent, ideologically. In a poem called "A Woman's Issue" Atwood lists several "exhibits" in her case against the patriarchy. Exhibit A: a woman with a "four inch/wooden peg jammed up/between her legs so she can't be raped." Exhibit B: a "spiked device/that locks around the waist and between/the legs, with holes in it like a tea strainer." And so on. "Marrying the Hangman" catalogues more war crimes in the bloody history of the sexes:

> He said: foot, boot, order, city, fist, roads, time, knife
> She said: water, night, willow, rope hair, earth belly, cave, meat, shroud, open, blood.

It seems a fairly traditional feminist tack: man, whom she once named "the hugest monster," is the oppressor, woman the victim. But these lines were written in 1978. Just when most women writers had geared down from the stridently "political" literature of the sixties and early seventies, Atwood was revving up, barreling full feminist throttle into the eighties. Clearly, her vision of woman-as-victim was more than mere received ideology. It ran much deeper.

Atwood's best-selling prose, though less grisly than the poetry, spelled out for the masses the message of her macabre imagination. Me-generation Gothic, you might call it. Anorexia, abortions, mastectomies, multiple personality disorders—her characters all pay the nasty clinical consequences of their neuroses. *Lady Oracle*'s heroine Joan whips up lathery visions of "knife-wielding rapists, their fangs dripping blood . . . burglars, dope-crazed and lethal . . . perverts who would chop me into pieces." The tone is comic, but the fears are real; they run through all her stories, short and long.

Atwood once confessed her frustration with one of her more virtuous, tidy characters: "I wanted her to fall into a mud puddle, have menstrual cramps, sweat, burp, fart." Well, it seems cramped, smelly, belching, flatulent heroines were what the reading public—and the critics—craved. Her books were translated into Italian, French, Japanese. As Atwood's literary stock soared, so did her institutional power, culminating in 1972 with the publication of *Survival*—a tendentious and brutally dull critical treatise that established Atwood as the queen not only of CanLit, but also of CanCrit.

Before *Survival* hit the stands the *Toronto Star* was already gushing over "its staggering first printing of 20,000, with college course outlines snapping it up sight unseen." The sycophantic tone of the *Star*'s report is revealing, and typical. The book pronounced Canadians to be a nation of victims and Canada "a collective victim," of both its harsh environment and colonialism. "The obsession with surviving can become the will not to survive," Atwood pronounced. Her bizarre anti-logic was soon embraced as doctrine by CanLit functionaries while pedagogues "snapped" the book up, no doubt excited by its helpful "How to Use This Book" chapter and its ready-made reading list of "Useful Books." Only a few dared voice dissent.

Some wondered why almost half the titles recommended by Atwood in *Survival*'s various reading lists came from the 1972 catalogue of Atwood's own publisher, the House of Anansi, on whose editorial board she served. Another strange coincidence: three of the four most frequently recommended authors in the book—Graeme Gibson, Roch Carrier, and Dennis Lee—also happened to be Anansi writers. More familiar names such as Mordecai Richler, Robertson Davies, Irving Layton—writers who do not appear to suffer from "the great Canadian victim complex"—were summarily ignored or dismissed.

As Canadian writing continues to diversify in the face of Atwood's monolithic victim theory, it becomes increasingly apparent that *Survival* is really about Atwood's own writing and her own life more than anyone else's. Consider the unsavory incident that has become known as the "Northern Journey Affair."

In 1974 Atwood helped organize the Writer's Union of Canada, to protect Canadian authors against evil American publishers. At roughly the same time, a story appeared in an obscure journal called *Northern Journey* to which Atwood took vociferous offense. The story, by Wil Wigle, featured a character named Margaret Atwood feeling "just a little uncomfortable with her role as the reigning queen of Canadian literature." Wigle described a poetry reading in Montreal after which Atwood received "a grand compliment"—a mildly pornographic remark attesting to her sexual desirability. Outraged, Atwood enlisted an attorney to extract a public apology from *Northern Journey* and called for the complete withdrawal from sale of the offending issue. She also convinced the Writer's Union, in which she wielded considerable power, to recommend that its members not offer their work to the magazine. Subsequently, Atwood demanded complete editorial control over all articles derived from interviews with her. Newspapers and magazines knuckled under meekly. Atwood, the victim, was vindicated.

"A man's presence suggests what he is capable of doing to you or for you. By contrast a woman's presence . . . defines what can and cannot be done to her." The quote is from John Berger, used by Atwood as the epigraph for her 1981 novel *Bodily Harm*. It is a neat epitome of her sexual politics. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, her most explicit fictional study in victimology, Atwood conjures a dystopian vision of America as a puritan theocracy run by right-wing fanatics and religious fundamentalists. Women are reduced to the status of "econowives" and "handmaids," breeders with fertile loins whose duty it is to service the patriarchy (or "penocracy," as some prefer to call it). These are the vivid nightmares of repression that must haunt Atwood in the small hours of the night. Would that they were more vivid when she commits them to literature. Mary McCarthy, ruminating upon *The Handmaid's Tale* for the *New York Times Book Review*, concluded that what the book lacked was "imagination." She also complained that the characters were dull, the language flat, and the premise untenable. But most cutting was her remark about the imagination. It got to the heart of the matter.

The icy hue of Atwood's latest melancholic collection of stories, *Bluebeard's Egg*, casts a pall over her prose from which situations, events, and characters never recover. Even the humor has a grim, nervous twitch to it, like laughter in a graveyard.

In "Hurricane Hazel," a story about teenage longing and confusion in rural Ontario circa 1950, Atwood moves from romance to breakup, but skips over passion. It is a story about sensuality devoid of sensuality. Atwood is at home in the sensual world only when it is poxed somehow, diseased. The first story, "Significant Moments in the Life of My Mother," begins: "When my mother was very small, someone gave

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ıer a basket of baby chicks for Easter. They all died." A one-liner with a certain deadpan charm, but the comedy soon turns black. The mother delights in reciting tales of unwanted pregnancies, illnesses of various horrible kinds, mental breakdowns, tragic suicides, unpleasant lingering deaths. The broad ironic stroke is still there, but the needling has become pointed. The "women's issues" alluded to tell us to pause, pay attention—and stop laughing.

By insisting on a programmatic male-female dualism, Atwood cramps the imagination. Language is not simply the rationalistic tool of man's invention, nor does man always occupy the surface of myth, woman the underground. Ironically her writing is, by her own standards, unquestionably "masculine"—didactic, calculating, anemic. Carolyn Forche said reading Atwood's poetry is like "following the maps she wishes destroyed." So blunt is her vision of the sexes and that which passes between them, that she misses the slippery ambiguities which make the erotic complex and . . . erotic.

Norman Mailer, wheezing lewd approval of some graphic images he encountered in the writing of Germaine Greer, remarked that "a wind in this prose whistled up the kilt of male conceit." Reading Margaret Atwood, I don my kilt but the wind never comes. Just a cold breeze. □

THE GREAT AMERICAN SALOON SERIES

THE WHEE! GENERATION

by Joe Mysak

Where once halibut and striped bass cast baleful eyes toward morning shoppers, there now exists the Serengeti Plain for the youthful sybarites of what the Celtic poet McCorry has termed the Whee! Generation.

There, in a two-block stretch beginning at the corner of Pearl and Fulton streets in lower Manhattan, against a backdrop of superannuated ships that would really be better off on a scrap heap, the gorgeous darlings of the age descend on Thursday and Friday nights, all white teeth and even tans and indestructible bodies, decked out in Brooks's finest and awash with cash.

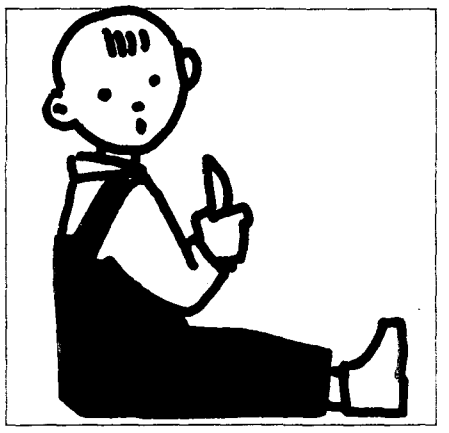
Accountants, lawyers, traders, investment bankers, bond salesmen, and cashiers, the young crew of Wall Street's engine room, stoking for the day they take the bridge and the high iron, here at the South Street Seaport slake their thirsts after days done doing deals, staring bleary-eyed at Telerate screens, hawking securities, pounding the keys of CRTs. In summer they mass right out on the cobblestones, downing big plastic tubs of beer at the weekly titanic keg party known as the Seaport Experience.

You can go look at the ships, or walk along Pier 17 with its pricey shops, or sample the chow inside the main Fulton Market pavilion, but the Big Show is right out on the street. You need not travel to Jeremy's, near the Brooklyn Bridge, or Flutie's, on the pier, although both are interesting and barbaric by turns, with reports coming in that last call at the one is 10 o'clock, and that prices start at $4 at the other. No, just pull up one of those big pails of beer sold at the North Star Pub, and dive into a scene comprising about equal parts *Newsweek, New York, Esquire*, and *USA Today* articles.

The scene, and especially its cast, are Important, and hence News, featured right up there along with the doings of Madonna and Sean Penn, the phenomenon of colored zinc oxide for beach wear, the crisis in movies, the bravery of Bette Midler. Only Nazis and How To Find Your Mate fare better among today's newshounds.

Here then are the Men in Yellow Ties and the ineffably sad women in suits and sneakers, talking M&A, public finance, collateralized mortgage obligations, Treasury rulings, insider trading, and the Long Guy. They talk of their jobs and the "bennies" that go along with them, the price of real estate, nose candy, sexual exploits, their careers, how HOT they are, and doing everything In a Big Time Way, which is why the Whee! Everything is *Oh, excellent* when it is not downright *fabu*.

These are the same people who do not buy stereos, but sound systems; not sneakers, but running shoes; not ham and cheese on rye, but Treaty of Westphalia Ham and Black Forest Muenster on a pita. It is too much to expect them to be content with Pabst or Budweiser and the occasional depth charge of Jack Daniel's; no, only Foster's Lager, or Harp on tap, or New Amsterdam, the most recent New York City brew, will do. And the drinking itself is not of the industrial Alaskan variety, wherein cheap philosophy is paid for dearly and we all become full of ourselves. Drinking at the Seaport is sloppy and frenzied.



The Seaport, in sum, is not the place for great drinking and the dialogues steeped in nobility and wonder that go along with it. This is not the place to discuss last week's bowling score, the words to the "Bonanza" theme song, or the fact that it's not *Lifestyles* of the Saints—among the greater discourses. This is a profane crowd, the same one present at the Sack of Rome, and while I was not expecting talk of Milton, Muggeridge, or Mother Teresa, it might have been nice to chew over whether Ted Simmons will make the Hall of Fame, whether Fred Lynn is done, the novel *Sometimes a Great Notion*, or why "Put out the fire, will you, Chief," is the best line in the movie *Jaws*.

Not in this crowd. But that may, after all, be just as well, because this crowd is notorious for taking something good and true and worthwhile and killing it with instant camp, things like Rolling Rock beer and professional wrestling and such reassuring models of domestic behavior as "Leave It to Beaver" and "My Three Sons." After they get through with it, and give it to Cyndi Lauper or MTV, you realize that it can never be good for you again.

There is a lot of noise at the Seaport, then, all signifying nothing. MTV, in fact, provided the only actual conversation I have ever had there, this brief exchange with a sweet young thing whose eyes betrayed a hard edge: "Oh, yeah, I was in a video," she said. I asked which one. "The Teen Dream," she replied. And what did she do in it? "I was the Teen Dream," she explained.

Well, there's not much to top that in this crowd, which is not quite composed entirely of young financial wizards and what Jim Rourke, late of the New Orleans Saints, once called "plastic women." There happen to be hundreds of girls in their summer dresses, blondes with brown tans named Kerry, and Tammy, and Colleen, lasses to make a man weep and conclude that Norman Mailer was right when he observed that "it didn't matter how good you were, you were never good enough." This is a sad business.

The whole mess moves indoors come winter, mainly to Roebling's, which is in the Fulton Market pavilion, but it does not change appreciably in any of its particulars. The same guzzling and hysteria goes on, in closer quarters, and although Roebling's is an otherwise well-appointed saloon—considering it is, after all, located in a mall—whatever ornaments of civilization that remain in the atmosphere are quickly heaved overboard in the crush.

Even experts like myself grope for comprehension of the phenomenon. The situation was well described by one usually suave Greek of my acquaintance, who said in a state of obvious confusion, "I don't know about this. It is everything, and at the same time, it is nothing." For the rest of us, creaking dinosaurs in the video age, the long stroll to the tarpits beckons. Then again, at the corner of Pearl and Fulton, you can always charter a limo: $30 for fifteen blocks. □

Joe Mysak is assistant managing editor of the Bond Buyer.

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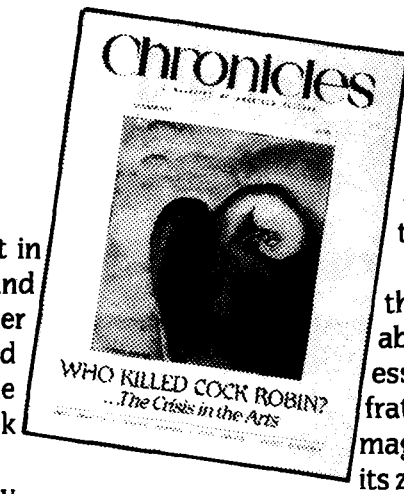

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BOOK REVIEWS

PAT NIXON: THE UNTOLD STORY

Julie Nixon Eisenhower/Simon and Schuster/$19.95

Thomas Mallon

It's hard to imagine anyone calling her "Babe," or that as a schoolgirl n the 1920s she gave a speech for La ollette instead of Coolidge, but those ıre facts about Pat Nixon. Her childıood was tough, and her daughter Iulie gives a memorable account of it ın the first chapters of this book. Thelma "Pat" Ryan was born in 1912 ın Ely, Nevada. She grew up in California. Her father, Will, was a sailor, prospector, miner, and farmer. Her mother, Kate, died of liver cancer before Pat turned fourteen: "With Kate at Doc Haskell's, thirteen-year-old Babe took over most of the responsibilities of the house. She was especially busy during harvesting time when she had to cook for extra hired help. The job of preparıng huge quantities of food affected her own appetite. More and more often, long after she had sat through dinner barely touching her food, she would make a batch of fudge for herself and eat it for dinner." Pat Nixon's lifelong thinness was not a matter of self-ınduced chic. When her father got sick with TB (he died when she was eighteen) she had to spend at least an hour after every meal sterilizing his dishes. The smell of the disinfectant "was so nauseating she was barely able to stomach her meals."

She was, her daughter Julie says, "old before her time," but had a gaiety that continued to surface amidst hardship. She got herself through college by taking jobs as a janitor, salesgirl, and movie extra and by living with her protective brothers. If she learned to be stoical ("In our family, we held our disappointment"), she remained kindly and pretty enough to become an exceptionally popular teacher at Whittier High School. An item from the school paper: "The boys of Miss Ryan's class say, 'We sure are lucky'—'Wonder where she lives?'—Flash!! Miss Ryan lives on Terrace Place next to a vacant lot! Wonder if it's for sale?"

Then *he* showed up.

Richard Nixon was a persistent, awkward suitor. He met Pat at some amateur theatricals in town. Julie seems to think he was a fast worker. "Only a month after the performance of *The Dark Tower*, he surprised Pat with flowers on her birthday." His love letters are pretty awful: in 1938 Nixon seems no more natural saying something's "swell" than he would thirty years later asking voters to "sock it to" the Democrats. One feels as if one is watching the class nerd's attempts at grooviness; they're affecting, but one has to wince. Julie, nevertheless, is out to depict her courting Dad as a fun guy; she tells about his winning a garter-tossing contest and quotes one friend's recollection of Dick as "the one with the crazy ideas." She says Pat "loved Dick's romantic nature," but that it took her a while to accept his proposal of marriage. He sent her presents, among them a pumpkin (no microfilm inside) and, finally, a May basket containing an engagement ring. After marriage in 1940 and a brief period with the OPA in Washington, Dick was off to New Caledonia with the South Pacific Air Transport Command. Pat sent him books, including Karl Marx. (Blame her, not Kissinger, for détente!)

Were they happy together, then and afterwards? Julie says yes, and I'm perfectly content to take her word for it. Despite Woodward and Bernstein, it doesn't feel like any of my, or the republic's, business. Their daughter says that both "were shy and both would find it difficult in the years ahead to break through their reserve and discuss their deepest feelings." I would very much doubt that children as loyal as the Nixons' would have resulted from a completely loveless marriage, just as I doubt that two single adults (Rose Mary Woods and Bebe Rebozo) would find among the Nixons what seem to have been their real homes, if there hadn't been a glow of some genuineness coming off the family hearth.

Certainly Richard Nixon's 1946 congressional campaign (during which his headquarters were burgled) had a romantic aura. He and Pat staked all their savings on a very long shot against New Dealer Jerry Voorhis; when they won they packed up their clothes and kitchen utensils and made the 3,000-mile trip to Washington by car.

It is around this time in the book that the reader will begin occasionally to ask, "Where's Pat?" since loyal Julie becomes diverted in purpose, seeking to offer not only her mother's life story, but also a spirited defense of every controversial moment in her father's career. If this papalogia seems beside the point and overly familiar (Adlai had a secret fund, too; Kennedy stole the '60 election, etc.), Julie pursues it so relentlessly that a reader has to marvel. There's a disagreeable nobility to what she does, and one can't but feel every man should be blessed with such a daughter.

Her main technique is the sly, ironic throwaway. When the reader first meets Martha Mitchell, he learns that she's "just been released from a private sanatorium where she had undergone psychiatric care and treatment for alcoholism." When Pat redoes the White House family quarters, we're told how she removes LBJ's "elaborate telephone with its taping capability and dozens of buttons." Describing reporters' attempts to get the First Lady's comments on public issues, Julie reminds us that "Even thirty years before, a reporter would never have dreamed of asking the very approachable Eleanor Roosevelt at a tea what she thought of the morality of her husband's attempt to pack the Supreme Court, or, later, about the war policy of fire-bombing Dresden." THEY ALL DID IT is the supplementary theme of this book, and Julie is so good at the sneak attack that her grandfather-in-law could have made use of her behind enemy lines on Omaha Beach.

To get back to Pat: she was a transitional political wife—newly visible, then too visible, then not visible enough. In 1950, during the race against Helen Douglas, she passed out plastic thimbles. Ten years later, some would criticize her for being too active a campaigner. And ten years after that, finally in the White House, she would be sneered at as a plastic wifey without her own Eleanorean role. What is irrefutable is how hard she always worked, not only in Nixon's campaigns, but also helping manage the "delicate and tenuous" relationship between Nixon and Ike in the fifties; smiling in a second-ladylike way at thousands of Communists and Rotarians; seeing her husband through the wilderness years

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of the sixties; talking up "volunteerism" while the country ululated through the early seventies. Not a self-pitying person, she could still sometimes feel her own contributions being slighted. When Charles Colson wrote a memo praising the PR-impact of her solo trip to Africa in 1972, she sent a copy to her longtime friend Helene Drown, with the annotation: "Thought you'd be amused at late recognition!" There is a predictable, slightly feminist slant to this daughter's account of her mother's unpaid activities, and it's justified.

After the 1960 election, firmly convinced that the Democrats had stolen Illinois and the White House, Pat was "disillusioned . . . beyond redemption" with politics. When it looked, in the early-morning hours after Election Night 1968, that Illinois might be made off with once again—Mayor Daley was holding back votes from Cook County—she got up from a hotel couch, went into the bathroom, and vomited. She arrived at the White House with the sense of Nixon as a habitual *victim* of dirty politics, and five years later her instinct was to fight his Watergate troubles to the end, even if she wouldn't ask him much about what was going on. She thought he should have burned the tapes.

The most ardent Nixon-haters may be moved by Julie's chapters dealing with the early days of exile in San Clemente: the former President's near death after a phlebitis attack; Pat's stroke (after reading *The Final Days*); the two of them watching "Bonanza" reruns while eating dinner from TV trays. In the spring of 1975 Julie begged off visiting, since she wanted to stay in Washington with her husband, who was studying for law-school exams. Her mother asked her to reconsider: "You have only one person to take care of there but two broken people here."

Mrs. Eisenhower's writing is generally concise, though her book is less well composed—in both senses of the term—in its later portions, as the author fights more and more shrilly for her father's reputation. The form of address is inevitably shaky—Pat and Dick are sometimes "mother" and "father"—but this is not unappealing. Like all inside biographical jobs, this one offers pleasurable trivia, tasty morsels of historical junk food. One learns that in the early fifties Miss Jacqueline Bouvier, the *Washington Times-Herald*'s "Inquiring Photographer," came upon little Julie Nixon and asked: "Do you play with Democrats?" Julie responded: "What's a Democrat?" (One night twenty years later, Julie, who by then knew all about Democrats, would be showing Caroline and John F. Kennedy, Jr. their parents' White House portraits.) During the '64 Republican convention, Pat was about to stand up and join the cheering for "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice!" until shrewd RN restrained her. The 37th President, one also learns, wasn't the only cottage-cheese eater in the Nixon family. Pat asked for some before going out to the Inaugural balls on January 20, 1969: someone from the White House kitchen had to run out to a 24-hour deli to get it. Lyndon and Lady Bird, it seems, didn't touch the stuff.

For each bunch of well-meant banal tributes quoted from loyal friends and staffers ("She never changed from the day I met her. She was always the same sweet person"), this book contains a reticent revelation that Julie was able to provoke from Pat: "Only once did she admit to me her father's temper and confrontations with Kate. Then firmly, so that I would know she was speaking her final words on the subject, she said: 'I detest temper. I detest scenes. I just can't be that way. I saw it with my father.' She paused for a moment and then added: 'And so to avoid scenes or unhappiness, I suppose I accommodated to others.' " These latter-day mother-daughter interviews make up the best paragraphs in the book.

It seems that Pat Nixon has little desire to be remembered by anyone but her family. It was years after the resignation before Julie could persuade her to have her portrait done for the White House: "I told her I hoped she would do it for Tricia and me and for our children. At one point I even argued, 'Mother, don't give those who would be happy if Daddy's and your portraits never hung in the White House a victory by default.' Her response was matter-of-fact: 'Why not? They won, didn't they?' " Julie says that these days her mother "cherishes the privacy of her retirement years and the family times that have been among the happiest of her life." The exact state of her health remains discreetly unclear at the end of the book.

I once saw Pat Nixon in person. When I was sixteen, during the '68 campaign, she and Richard Nixon came down Hempstead Turnpike, in Franklin Square, New York in an open car. Right near where I stood the motorcade stopped and Nixon got up to make a stump speech full of World Series imagery. I looked at Pat, who seemed to me pale and old (everyone looks old when you're sixteen) but otherwise pretty and as expected, on the middle-class order of Beaver Cleaver's mom. Except for one incongruity: she was sitting on the top of the back seat, almost on the trunk, and her high heels were digging into the limo's red upholstery. It was a curiously luxuriant sight, almost decadent, out of keeping with the rest of the picture. If you totalled the effect, it came to a startling one of somebody dwelling in unanticipated circumstances. I was reminded of this image by a prettier one given by Julie Nixon Eisenhower in Chapter 22 of this book: It is during the early days of the first Nixon Administration; the First Family have retired from a state dinner, but it is hard to sleep over the store: the sounds of the party keep coming up. Julie goes down to get something to eat from the second-floor family kitchen:

> As I stepped off the elevator into the long, wide hallway, only one lamp was lighted on a table a few feet from where I stood. Thirty yards away, at the entrance to the Grand Staircase, I saw my mother, still dressed in her evening gown. She was swaying to the faint sound of music coming from the Grand Foyer where some of the guests were still enjoying the dancing. On tiptoes, she moved gracefully across the gleaming parquet floor.

A poignant image of this admirable woman in this unyielding book by this valorous daughter. □

THE GENTLEMAN FROM MARYLAND

Robert Bauman/Arbor House/$17.95

Aram Bakshian, Jr.

This is not an easy review to write . . . for the reverse of the usual reasons. Most conservative reviewers of ex-Representative Bob Bauman's *The Gentleman from Maryland* have felt constrained by the fact that the author is a fallen friend; my own problem is that I felt a vague distaste for the fellow in his salad days, on grounds having nothing to do with his subsequent public disgrace.

As a conservative active in Republican politics, I met Bob Bauman on numerous occasions over the years, beginning in the 1960s. While I had no inkling of the personal problems that would come to light not long after our last meeting—as members of a discussion panel on the GOP vice presidential nomination held on Capitol Hill in early 1980—Bob had always struck me as one of those all-too-typically zealous workaholics one comes across in every "movement," not least the conservative.

Although undeniably bright, ambitious, and, at that time, one of the most promising members of the House of Representatives, he struck me as a rather crass, one-dimensional man-on-the-make, someone who happened to be on my side of the political fence but was an otherwise uninteresting character. More of a cold fish than a noble—or tormented—soul.

As it turns out, I was quite wrong; at the very least, I mistook symptoms for causes in my snap judgment of the man before his fall. What I had seen *had* been there—the movement zealotry, the zest for puerile political game-playing, the incomplete or damaged man driven to achieve not only acceptance, but authority in the outer, political world to fill a yawning internal void; the outsider compelled to become *someone* in the eyes of the crowd because he is nothing in his own.

But the compulsive quest for outer trappings was symptomatic of something I had missed—Bob Bauman's self-loathing based, from what he now tells us, on a wretched childhood and a sense of alienation rooted in a homosexuality that drove him long before he knew its name.

Hence my qualms in commenting on his memoir—in a review I was asked to write, rather than one I sought out—are not due to any lingering affection for an old comrade in arms. They stem, instead, from a reluctance even to appear to deride a person I never liked

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Aram Bakshian, Jr., a former aide to three Presidents, writes frequently on politics, history, and the arts.

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after that person has fallen on hard, not to say evil, times; especially someone like Bauman who, if still wrongheaded on certain points, has shown courage and, latterly, more candor than one might expect, in the course of a sordid ordeal. I hope what I now write about him is fair; it is a tribute to his book that, fair or not, having read *The Gentleman from Maryland*, I can write about him with a deeper degree of understanding and compassion than would have been the case before.

First, a few positives. By his own lights, Bob Bauman has written a brave and painfully honest account of his life. He spares himself nothing, he asks for no pity, and most readers should come away from his book with a measure of respect for what he has *tried* to say and do in the aftermath of an undeniable tragedy. He is neither a villain nor a campy figure of fun like the late Tom Driberg, a flagrantly faggoty member of Parliament—and a Marxist to boot—of whom Winston Churchill remarked he was the sort of fellow who brought buggery into disrepute.

Bauman is altogether different, a serious man who has lost, through a flaw—or fluke—in his character, most of what he once thought dearest to him. That the wounds were the result of his own actions makes the case all the more poignant. For years, if not forever, his political ambitions have been dashed and, as he acknowledges, he has left deep scars on a family he loved. All this is very sad and deserves sympathy. He has mine.

But, much as he loved the things he destroyed or wounded, they seem to have meant less to him, to have been less a part of him, than something else. At the height of his public career, Bob Bauman, who now says he was always a latent homosexual, became what in heterosexual terms might be called a drunken philanderer, buying sex from male prostitutes, sometimes minors, in the course of alcoholic binges. He did this, again and again, while still posing as a loyal husband and father, occupying an office of public trust, and claiming to be devoted to a religion, Roman Catholicism, that flatly condemns the *practice* of his particular indulgence as a major sin rather than a peccadillo. Politically, he represented a constituency whose moral and ethical values, in principle if not in application, were also at odds with his sexual practices.

In 1980, after his exposure, but pleading that he was undergoing rehabilitation, Bauman was only narrowly defeated for re-election in his conservative Maryland congressional district. His attempted comeback in 1982, now estranged from his wife and somewhat disingenuous about his current lifestyle, was a predictable fiasco.

Quite rightly, Bauman doesn't complain about the outcome so much as the cruel—and sometimes hypocritical—treatment he received at the hands of some reporters and politicians along the way. He also resents the fact that a number of practicing homosexuals in high elective and appointive office continue to enjoy a protective blackout from the liberal media that was denied him. While this is quite true, it is a little too much like the common complaint of all apprehended culprits that they were only doing what other people get away with every day—be they Peeping Toms or axe murderers.

Today, Bob Bauman has paid a high price for his transgression, whether one considers it a violation of the law, a betrayal of trust, a mortal sin, or merely a breach of good taste. One hopes he can build a new life for himself and find some measure of internal peace after all the years of self-loathing that led up to his humiliating political self-immolation.

But it is still not clear what Bob Bauman is and what he is capable of becoming. He bemoans his loss of wife, wounding of family, and fall from public grace. He recognizes the fact that his homosexual behavior and alcoholism were the cause of his degradation, the former as underlying force, the latter as symptom and catalyst. But, while one senses that he would like to be a good husband, a good father, and a political leader again, he also wants us to take him as he is, sexually, in a way that cannot be reconciled with the religion, ethics, and morality of the things—personal, social, and political—he would reclaim.

Perhaps this is inevitable; perhaps not. If Bob Bauman had taken the same attitude toward his alcoholism that he takes toward his homosexuality, he would still be a drunk. Instead, after a struggle, he gave up alcohol. He remains an alcoholic, but his alcoholism has been mastered, or at least contained; it no longer drives him. To judge from his book, Bob Bauman also remains a homosexual . . . but not an abstainer.

Without making a personal judgment on the man, I think these opposite reactions to the twin sources of his tragedy tell us something about what, in the last analysis, is really most important to him. This being the case, until either he or society change their values, Bob Bauman will remain a brave but misguided outcast from the milieu he aspired to—a worthy man in many ways, but a flawed exile, whether of his own making, society's, or, what is more likely, both. □

THE MEDIA ELITE: AMERICA'S NEW POWERBROKERS

S. Robert Lichter, Stanley Rothman, and Linda S. Lichter
Adler & Adler/$19.95

Michael A. Scully

In an important essay in the May 1981 issue of *Commentary*, the late Joseph Kraft described some critical changes that had affected journalism since the 1960s. Print and television journalists, he wrote, had undergone a "startling transformation," and become "among the principal beneficiaries of American life."

> We have enjoyed a huge rise in income, in status, and in power. In the process we have edged away from roles and standards hallowed by tradition. We no longer represent a wide diversity of views. We have ceased to be neutral in reporting events. We have moved from the sidelines to a place at the center of the action.

As Daniel P. Moynihan put it in the early 1970s, "Journalism has become, if not an elite profession, a profession attractive to elites."

In *The Media Elite*, S. Robert Lichter, Stanley Rothman, and Linda S. Lichter exhaustively examine the views and preconceptions of reporters and others employed by America's most important media outlets: the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and the three major television networks. (Two more volumes of the authors' findings, based on their decade-long research into the views of a variety of American elites—including business, military, and religious leaders—will be published in the next two years.) The authors' goal is to examine "the life situations of these newspeople and the nature of their product, to determine whether or how the two are linked."

The authors insist that media bias is not the issue. Indeed, they argue, "the whole notion of bias has become a straw man that obscures the far less obvious (and less nefarious) processes

Michael A. Scully's articles and reviews have appeared in Harper's, Fortune, *the* Wall Street Journal, *and many other publications. His anthology,* The Best of THIS WORLD, *containing twenty-seven articles from the journal's first five years, was recently published by University Press of America.*

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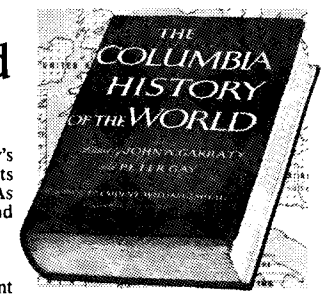

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that mediate between journalists' perspectives and their product." Nevertheless, the first quarter of the book reports the authors' findings, and numerous other studies, virtually all to the point that in their own ideological self-descriptions as well as on most topical issues journalists are well to the left of the business elite and the general public. This is not earth-shattering news, partly because the authors have previously published much of their data in journals such as the American Enterprise Institute's *Public Opinion*.

This is not to suggest that the data are not fascinating. An imposing 40 percent of the sample of 238 journalists had fathers who were in "professional" occupations. Ninety-three percent of those interviewed graduated from college, and 55 percent studied at the post-graduate level. Furthermore, these data were collected in 1979 and 1980; undoubtedly, the percentages in all these cases would be even higher today.

In the four presidential elections nearest the survey, the journalists voted overwhelmingly for the Democratic candidates. Johnson received 94 percent of the journalists' votes in 1964; Humphrey, 87 percent in 1968; McGovern, 81 percent in 1972; and Carter, 81 percent in 1976. Nearly half the respondents believe the government should guarantee jobs. Fifty-six percent believe the U.S. exploits the Third World and causes poverty. Fifty-seven percent consider the U.S. use of resources immoral.

The authors devote almost all of the last third of the book to media coverage of three topics: nuclear power, school busing, and the oil industry. In this strong section, they first describe the views of experts in the field under discussion, and compare the experts' consensus, such as there is one, with media coverage of the subject. In each instance, media coverage gives short-shrift to expert opinion, proclaiming nuclear power more dangerous, busing more salutary, and the oil industry more culpable for price increases and shortages than would most experts.

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The authors seek, with mixed results, to probe the underlying presuppositions of the journalists by means of a personality test called the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). The TAT involves showing a picture of an ambiguous scene to the respondent, who then interprets it, much as would someone taking a Rorschach ink-blot test. "When people use their imaginations to structure an ambiguous situation," say the authors, "they inadvertently reveal what is on their minds." The first chapter that describes the findings of this test is unquestionably the weakest in the book. In a later chapter, however, the authors describe how answers to the TAT made it possible to compare a generalized journalistic personality type with that of businessmen, who were also asked to respond to the TAT. The authors describe their findings as follows:

> The media elite scores significantly higher than the business group in their power needs, fear of power, and narcissism. The businessmen have significantly stronger achievement needs and a slightly greater capacity for personal intimacy. . . . [The journalists] seem more fearful that others may gain control over them.

As a check on their findings, the authors sent random samples of 30 journalists' and 30 businessmen's TAT stories to a clinical psychologist, who knew nothing of the professions of the respondents nor of the nature of the study. She concluded, after writing clinical portraits of the subjects based on their answers, that the journalists were "people with rich emotional lives who were, however, highly narcissistic and conflicted." The businessmen, by comparison, "seemed to her emotionally 'flat' or self-controlled, but also more at ease with themselves." On the page following this description, the authors offer what may well be the most important paragraph in their book:

> The divergent motivational patterns of these two competitors for social influence may have significance for the future development of American civic culture. . . . Daniel Bell has argued that America's economic and cultural elites represent different sensibilities, with the former more oriented toward achievement and the latter toward self-expression.

The authors cite in a note the first chapter of Professor Bell's *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, and a section at the end of his earlier work, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*. In the latter, Bell describes perfectly the journalists' milieu, and explains why—indeed—Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter are correct to think that the problem of journalists' perceptions is far deeper than can be encompassed by such buzzwords as "liberal bias."

> Ideas and cultural styles do not change history—at least, not overnight. But they are the necessary preludes to change, since change in consciousness—in values and moral reasoning—is what moves men to change their social arrangements and institutions.
>
> This is the cultural dilemma of capitalist society: it must now acknowledge the triumph (albeit tempered) of an adversary "ideology," the emergence of a new class which sustains this ideology, and the collapse of the older value system which was, ironically, undermined by the structural transformation of capitalism itself. The inimical ideology is . . . the cultural chic of "modernism" which retains its subversive thrust however much it is absorbed by the system. *This new class, which dominates the media and the culture, thinks of itself less as radical than "liberal," yet its values, centered on "personal freedom," are profoundly anti-bourgeois.* The value system of capitalism repeats the old pieties, but they are hollow *because they contradict the reality, the hedonistic life-styles promoted by the system itself.* [Emphasis mine.]

To read Lichter, Rothman, and Lichter's findings in light of Professor Bell's thesis is to begin to grasp the depth of his understanding of our cultural predicament. On questions of economics, the journalists' attitudes, though leaning toward statist policies, are far short of being radical. For example, 86 percent agreed with the statement that "people with more ability should earn more," and 70 percent think private enterprise is fair to workers. Six out of ten thought that less regulation of business would be good for the U.S., while only 13 percent thought "big corporations should be publicly owned."

Now consider the same journalists' responses to questions involving "personal freedom." Nine out of ten journalist-respondents agreed with the statement that a "woman has a right to decide on abortion," while only one in four agreed with the statement that homosexuality is wrong. A mere 15 percent agreed that "homosexuals shouldn't teach in public schools." Slightly under half (47 percent) said that "adultery is wrong." Add to these findings that 50 percent of the journalists surveyed described themselves as having no religion, and 49 percent believe "the structure of society causes alienation," and the last brush strokes are in place.

The face in the picture is none other than man in his naked, shivering modern condition. And, unfortunately, it is anything but a limited edition.

The so-called "yuppies," whom most journalists instinctively despise for their acquisitiveness, have views on matters of morality and religion far

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closer to journalists' attitudes than to those of the bourgeoisie of even a single generation ago. Furthermore, numerous surveys of business leaders disclose that they profess laissez faire views regarding *both* economic *and* personal behavior. In practice, most might take a government bailout before a mistress, but they have largely forgotten the arguments against the latter.

Journalists—Joseph Kraft said they had become a kind of lumpen aristocracy—are the vanguard of the lumpen middle class. If you think media bias is something to worry about, wait until those five-year-olds now being reared on MTV start taking out your daughter. □

PARADISE POSTPONED

John Mortimer/Viking Penguin/$17.95

Reid Buckley

What a relief to be off avant-garde fiction by form-obsessed Hispanics and sit down with a fustian old-fashioned complicatedly yet deftly plotted English novel of the armchair-and-slippers sort! Such is John Mortimer's *Paradise Postponed*, set in rural England between 1948 and 1982 (and now being portrayed in an eleven-part series on PBS's "Masterpiece Theatre"), a story that charms from its opening sentence (" 'I had a disagreeable dream,' the old man said") right through to the romantic epilogue that follows a stylish, ironical, mischievous, and touching denouement after the grand Victorian manner.

Now that is a heap of complimentary adjectives, obliging me to come up with hard coin. The old man in question is Simeon Simcox, Anglican rector of Rapstone parish, widely known as the "Red Rector of Rapstone" for his socialist views. More committed to preaching the Gospel of the New Jerusalem on earth than the ghostly creed of his calling, he is a popular and admired figure. He is endearingly eccentric, also; but shortly after his death that charming eccentricity is given a shocking turn when the family solicitor reveals that Simeon has disinherited wife and two grown sons, leaving his estate entire to one Leslie Titmuss, well-named by his mother-in-law, Lady Grace Fanner, as "toad Titmuss."

No one, least of all sons Henry and Fred, *seemingly* widow Dorothy, comprehends this extraordinary behavior. Titmuss is an impossible person, the nakedly ambitious brat of a longtime bookkeeper for Simcox Ales, the family's business, who has schemed his way to riches and political eminence; moreover, as a *minister* in Mrs. Thatcher's reactionary government, which should have gagged in his benefactor's throat. At once the question pops into the public mind: at eighty years of age, had the eccentric Rev. Simcox gone dotty? This son Henry, a successful novelist, seeks diligently to prove, calling to witness behavior that viewed in hindsight is odd indeed, such as the time when the vicar opened the door to visitors dressed as a woman (he was enacting Lady MacBeth for his boys, but who was to know that), or another time when he entered Rapstone Manor, on his knees, trumpeting, one arm extended in front in imitation of an elephant's trunk, the other held behind to resemble an elephant's tail.

Dorothy Simcox is affronted by son Henry's suit. She much prefers to be cut out of the will than to have her husband's reputation damaged. There are clear hints, also, that she is alarmed by what investigation into Simeon's past might disclose. Fred, her younger son, a bachelor country doctor who since schooldays has never got along with the dominating Henry, is if anything even more deeply offended, and his immediate object in life becomes to frustrate Henry's litigation by discovering some sane explanation for his father's strange last testament.

From this sibling rivalry we discover much about the Rev. Simcox's divided heart. When still a young man, Fred fell in love with Agnes, beautiful daughter of old Dr. Salter, a crusty agnostic and Simeon Simcox's natural foil. To the indignation of Henry, Fred deserted a march protesting the latest abominations by the South African government to meet with Agnes for an evening of dancing that ended with the double profanation of their making love in the churchyard. Agnes eventually became pregnant; but by this time Fred had conceived a significant affection for her father, whose integrity of unbelief is absolute, and in following Dr. Salter on his country rounds discovered in himself a deep commitment to medicine. This was probably in reaction to, yet also in fulfillment of, his own father's activist political dedication, which—contrastingly—sublimated a failure of belief. Fred tells Agnes he cannot afford to marry her. All right, she says, bitter in her disappointment: but in that case she will need £100 for an abortion. Fred cannot raise the money.

Brother Henry, meanwhile, had been negotiating the film rights of his first novel with the awful Benny Bugloss, a not tremendously original caricature of the big-talking, loud-mouthed, sleazy film producer. In his pompous way, Henry announces to Agnes and Fred that he has broken off these negotiations, and thus saved his soul, of which Fred is permitted to wonder privately the whereabouts. (The novel revolves on integrity.) But when Henry learns of Agnes's fix, he goes back to Bugloss, selling out in order to raise the £100. His prize is Agnes, who eventually becomes his wife.

Both brothers are profoundly wounded by these events, each in his way adumbrating the compromises that their father never reconciled. Fred failed to live up to the challenge that Agnes flung at him; he did not dare, and lost, and carried on with an empty aching heart, becoming almost an ascetic in his calling; but also, because of his personal defeat, preparing himself to understand, and to pity with no diminution of love or respect, the father who broke faith as well. As for Henry, he in fact compromised his integrity by going Hollywood, abandoning his inherited leftwing beliefs, becoming with time (and the prosperity attending his literary success) a Tory stuffed shirt. The saddest thing about Henry is that though he is the person who most astutely articulates the weaknesses of his father, he does so with an absence of compassion, and never leaps to an understanding of related faults in himself. Resolution in the lives of these three people (Agnes, Fred, and Henry) is synchronized with the unwrapping of the mystery of Simeon Simcox's will.

The milieu Mr. Mortimer has chosen for his novel is stock English and a never failing lode for the comic novelist's eyes. Rapstone Village is the aristocratic seat of the county, and historically royalist, but the county includes also the village of Skurfield, once part of Picton Principal, whose seat, Picton House, is the property of the Stroves, a gloomy tribe of gentry formerly given to hanging their tenants from an old yew tree. Politically they were Puritans, who under the parliamentarian banner once invaded Rapstone Village, seizing the Manor and indulging in much righteous sack, pillage, and rape. The Restoration put things to rights; and both families, the Fanners and the Stroves, declined by inevitable degrees as the generations succeeded one another, their circumstances shrinking, though one Magnus Strove revived his family's fortunes at the turn of the century by (the ironies are all intentional) buying up slum properties, permitting his son Doughty to lead the comfortable life of a propertied squire. A skirtchaser in his youth, Doughty becomes by early old age—when we meet him—an almost moot Tory MP of the brainless type, with a burning but secret ambition to be elevated to the House of Lords. It is fitting that the chairman of the county Conservative party should be Sir Nicholas Fanner of Rapstone, tall, dull, and amiable, and that Doughty Strove, descended of Puritans, labors under the delusion that his ambition is being furthered by the scion of ancestral foes.

This (preposterous) notion (it begs conceiving that even the House of Lords has fallen so low as to admit a Doughty Strove into its company) is cleverly planted by Leslie Titmuss, the *arriviste*. By dint of tireless service Titmuss has, if not ingratiated himself with the executive committee of the local Conservative party (nobody can *like* Leslie Titmuss), indebted the committee to him. He plots to have Doughty Strove give up his seat in expectation of greater things, thus leaving it open for himself.

Leslie is some piece of work. Son of Elsie, once a toothsome parlor maid at Picton House, and still a good-looking woman, the anagramous Leslie may be

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a sprout from Doughty's wild oats; it just could be (much is alleged, implied, suggested, or inferred by everyone without anyone coming right out and saying so) that he seeks unwittingly to displace his natural father. (It wouldn't bother him in the least.) Leslie begins his climb out of lower middle-class obscurity by making up to the Rector of Rapstone, cutting the nettles in the vicar's garden for him when his own sons decline the prickly job. He is determined to make something of himself, to escape the prison of his station, which, even today, in England is not far removed from the permanence of condition implied in Jane Austen's novels. He studies hard; he learns accounting himself, working nights at courses in higher finance; he keeps the books for, and in time becomes a junior partner of, the commercial real estate development firm founded by the odious Magnus Strove (son of Doughty) and another young toff; and he crowns this first stage in his career by winning the affection of Charlotte (Charlie) Fanner, dumpy, bitter, hysterical daughter of the vapid Lady Grace, who is that most pitiable and lamentable of all female creatures, an aging beauty. Charlie cannot stand her silly dame, who, she knows, is ashamed of her plain daughter. She enthusiastically conspires with Leslie in faking a pregnancy, boldly maneuvering to make it impossible for Lady Grace to whisk her away to the Continent for a discreet abortion. Leslie becomes the son-in-law of Rapstone Manor, and at the time the novel opens, his star has not only soared politically, he has permitted (there was luck involved here) Magnus Strove to come to ruin, so that he has ended up usurping not only the Strove safe seat in Parliament, but Picton House, their county seat, as well.

On top of this—incredibly, inexplicably—Simeon Simcox bequeaths to Leslie Titmuss his stock in the prosperous Simcox Brewery, income from which has enabled Simeon to live comfortably while indulging in his egalitarian socialist politics. Simeon's will is not only dumbfounding; it is on all counts gratuitous.

A barrister by profession, the many-faceted Mr. Mortimer puppeteers the puzzles of his dense plot with a lawyer's nicety. His method in this novel is to advance and develop by a succession of interconnecting vignettes, the conclusion of one suggesting the subject of the next, even though the succeeding episode may take place in the past, ten or even forty years before the death of the vicar in 1982, *its* conclusion neatly explicating action in the present—that is, since the death of the vicar. A playwright, Mr. Mortimer has an acute ear for dialogue. Says the contumacious Henry to his second wife Lonnie after the father's burial, "I'd need a miracle to divide one bottle of strictly non-South African, anti-apartheid sherry among all those thirsty mourners. I don't suppose *he*'d've managed it. My father wasn't much of a man for miracles." Lady Grace remarks to Fred, "I was devoted to your father, even though he sometimes looked at me as though he disapproved of my not being black . . ." Lady Grace, who is vain, and capricious, and everything that is shallow, is nevertheless given some of the best lines, especially where concerning her "appalling" son-in-law, "Well, absolutely anything we can do to scupper the toad, Titmuss. Isn't that right, Jennifer?" and in reference to a poacher whom she detested, "He got above himself. He tried to interfere with other people. He was the first symptom of the national disease that spread alarmingly and became Leslie Titmuss." Mortimer's dialogue is always pithy, in character, and helps define either the speaker or someone alluded to by the speaker.

He has an eye for the striking visual image. Of Agnes, Fred's mistress become Henry's first wife, "Shortsightedness added to her habitual expression of ironic contempt, so that she looked as though she were watching a theatrical performance which she had decided not to enjoy." Of Lady Grace, "There [she] sat, with a face dead-white and powdered, a head apparently held up by a choker of pearls and a mouth like a small wound." He has a talent, besides, for summing up a person with telling brevity, as when introducing George Titmuss, awful Leslie's (putative) father: "He spoke in a deliberate and extremely boring voice, which caused his utterances to be dreaded at the meetings of the Parish Council. He was, undoubtedly, a direct descendant of one of those dedicated Skurfield Puritans who attacked Rapstone Manor with crowbars and reaping hooks during the Civil War."

First-rate compost, spaded into the rich soil of his novel with considerable skill, so that we read from page to page happily spinning our private speculations about the will and about the past lives of Simeon Simcox and his contemporaries, intrigued by an incongruous word here, an opaquely revelatory touch there. Mr. Mortimer's familiar theme is the failed twilight of the Fabian-humanist dream, etiolated England post-Empire and post-Christian. He plays this theme against the secret guilt that ultimately is called upon to explain the actions of Simeon, a man who served Karl Marx better than his God, and like Cardinal Woolsey in another connection, lived to regret it. □

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A SUMMONS TO MEMPHIS

Peter Taylor/Alfred A. Knopf/$15.95

George Sim Johnston

Nietzsche says somewhere that the only genuine impulse in Wagner's music is the composer's desire to make an impression, and one might extend this observation to most modern art. Certainly, it would seem to apply to much "serious" fiction being written today in America. For given a lack of interest either in the moral life of individuals or in any social realities which have not already been subject to endless refractions in more accessible media like film and rock music, what can a writer do except show that he has technique, that he can ride a bicycle with no hands? And the technical prowess of many of our more acclaimed writers *is* dazzling. People like Raymond Carver, Don DeLillo, Donald Barthelme, and John Barth often seem as though they can do anything—except write about people. Carver, for example, views the human race as divided into two categories, the insane and the merely pathetic. This savage reductionism would make it easy to dismiss his stories if it weren't for the fact that many of them are so well done.

And so it goes with the others. Barthelme even wrote a clever little pastiche a while back, entitled "At the Tolstoy Museum," which admitted in an oblique way to the problem. Just why our most talented writers get so angular and evasive when it comes to addressing the mainstream of human experience is a puzzle that we won't try to solve here. Fortunately, however, there are still a few around who write fiction that might be recognized as such by the great nineteenth century practitioners. Isaac Bashevis Singer is one; and another is Peter Taylor.

Until a year or so ago, there seemed to be a conspiracy of silence surrounding Peter Taylor's work. Beginning in the forties, he had written some of the best short stories around but you never heard or read about his work, and most of his books were hard to find. Now a revival is under way which is all the more ferocious for being several decades late. His books are being reincarnated in designer paperbacks, prices of his first editions are in a vertical ascent, and reviewers who have previously ignored him are invoking his name as a standard with which to measure every hot new number out of the workshops.

Actually, I can't think of another living American author who can be more profitably assigned in a writers' workshop, although Taylor's craft goes against the grain of everything that seems to be taught in those places. His stories are the opposite of pyrotechnical; like Tolstoy, he is concerned almost exclusively with the moral life of his characters, and nothing, not a single description of a magnolia blossom, is allowed to get in the way of its revelation. His style calls no attention to itself; it is a pane of glass on which you have to tap now and then to remind yourself that it is there. There is a residue of silence when you finish one of Taylor's stories which must approach—I don't know—what silence was generally like before television. For Taylor is the only American fiction writer I can think of since John Cheever whose prose and dialogue might be construed as having been written before the advent of mass communications.

Taylor is not prolific, nor is he a long ball hitter. Since graduating in 1940 from Kenyon College—the place to be for a young writer back then—he has published about one short story a year. (There have also been a few plays, although I am not aware of any having been produced, at least in New York.) If you don't count *A Woman of Means*, which was published in 1953 and is really a novella, *A Summons to Memphis* is the 69-year-old author's first novel. And at two hundred-odd pages, it barely weighs in as a full-length novel. But, as usual, Taylor manages to pack a great deal into a small narrative container.

The novel is about a small crisis in a well-to-do Southern family. Tolstoy told us that happy families are all alike, while unhappy families are not; but in the first sentence, Taylor introduces an unhappy family in a typically unhappy situation: "The courtship and remarriage of an old widower is always made more difficult when middle-aged children are involved—especially when there are unmarried daughters." In the second and third sentences, he pins down the setting: "This seemed particularly true in the landlocked, backwater city of Memphis some forty-years ago. At least it is a certainty that remarriage was more difficult for old widowers in Memphis than it was over in Nashville, say, or in Knoxville . . ." And in the fourth sentence—but then go to a bookstore and see for yourself how adroit Taylor is with the preliminaries.

The story is told by the lapsed middle-age son of the widower. Lapsed middle-age men are a specialty of modern Southern writing, of course, and the other members of the family—two spinster sisters, a mother who one day complains of an imaginary ailment and retires to her bed for thirty years, and a father who preserves in his stiff manner the gentility of the Old South—would also seem at first glance to have been found in a gothic curio cabinet belonging to Faulkner or the early Capote. But there is nothing lurid or violent about Peter Taylor's Southerners. Their lives are mellow and slightly sad and marked by a fleeting dignity. It is a world which is closer in atmosphere to an early Tolstoy story like "Family Happiness" than to *Sanctuary* or *Light in August*.

The plot is quite simple. Phillip Carver, a Southern expatriate who has settled for a quiet, disembodied existence among his books in New York—he is the sort who postpones turning on lamps at twilight—is summoned back to Memphis by his two middle-age sisters when it appears that their 81-year-old father is about to marry a much younger woman, a prospect which does not delight them, not the least because it threatens their inheritance. Phillip answers the summons and the family crisis comes to a slightly unexpected resolution. But the substance of the book is really the recollections about his family which the summons to Memphis provokes in Phillip.

The epochal event in the family history turns out to be the betrayal many years ago of the father by a business associate; the resulting financial and moral devastation makes the father decide to pull up stakes in Nashville and start his career over in Memphis. The move is traumatic to his wife and children, for while the two cities are only two hundred miles apart, the psychic distance is much greater; Phillip reminds us that this was before the South was homogenized by four-lane highways and Holiday Inns. Phillip considers his father's decision to move as brave—but also selfish. In any event, the family never recovers from the migration, and the increasingly difficult behavior of his father and sisters drives Phillip to New York. There, in his "tenth floor 82nd Street serenity," he is content to forget the past, make polite replies to any communications from his family, and lead a life of bookish reverie.

But as he is drawn back into family affairs in Memphis, he makes the discovery that one cannot really escape the past—that, as Faulkner put it, "the

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past is never past"—and that forgetting is not the same as forgiving. In the end, Phillip learns—or maybe does not learn: in Taylor's fiction, as in life, the moral evolution of an individual is never certain—one of the harder lessons, which is that one is never in the position to pass judgment on others. But as he calmly tells his story to the reader, Phillip unwittingly illustrates the Kierkegaard quotation with which another Southern writer began *his* first novel: "The specific character of despair is precisely this, it is unaware of being despair."

Taylor's moral preoccupations, which are profound, are woven into the narrative with such subtlety that one can get very near to the end of a first reading without realizing the endless ramifications of what is going on. One can, in fact, simply surrender to the pleasures of a well-done novel of manners. For Taylor gets all the social details exactly right—the rich *are* different in his fiction, and the old rich, with their battered Chevies and elaborate fussiness of dress, are most different of all. My only complaint about *A Summons to Memphis*, and about Taylor's writing in general, is that it is perhaps a bit too low-key; the style could use a little more color; it reminds me of Fitzgerald's remark to Hemingway about certain writers who seem "moved by everything to exactly the same degree of mild remarking." But I feel embarrassed making any complaint about a writer who has waited so long for his due and to whom we should all be grateful. □

LIFE AND FATE

Vasily Grossman, translated by Robert Chandler
Harper & Row/$22.50

Anita Susan Grossman

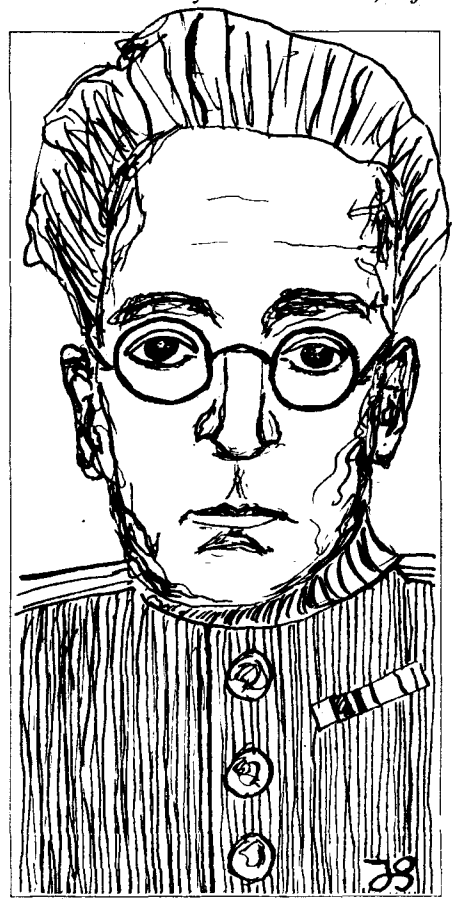
Although Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate* is an extremely interesting novel, the story behind its appearance in the West has tended to overshadow most discussions of the book's literary merits. Until long after his death in 1964, Grossman had been known merely as a popular Soviet writer, the author of politically orthodox novels and wartime reportage. Readers of *Forever Flowing*, a novel he wrote in secret during the last few years of his life, knew another side of Grossman: the persecuted critic of totalitarianism. His troubles may be said to have begun in 1946, when his play, *If You Believe the Pythagoreans*, was attacked by Soviet authorities. In fact, there was little that was controversial in this innocuous, even servile play; rather, it was the author's Jewish origins that rendered him suspect. About the same time, the government suppressed *The Black Book of Soviet Jewry*, an account which Grossman had co-edited with Ilya Ehrenburg of Nazi atrocities in occupied Russia. Hardly was the war over than the subject of anti-Semitism became officially taboo again.

Grossman lay low for a number of years and worked on a huge novel about the battle of Stalingrad, *For a Just Cause*, which appeared in *Novy Mir* in 1952. Unfortunately, the climate at the time was, if anything, worse than in 1946, for Stalin was gearing up for another major anti-Jewish purge. Initially the novel was quite favorably received, but within a few months critics were changing their tune on orders from above. Grossman was vilified in all the Party organs, and was clearly being set up for an even more unpleasant fate when Stalin's death intervened in March 1953. Within a year the writer was back in good standing with the regime, which decorated him on his fiftieth birthday and reissued a collection of his writings in 1958.

Despite his return to respectability, Grossman could never forget his near encounter with disaster. Once and for all, his eyes had been opened to the nature of the system he had defended so stoutly in his writings. *For a Just Cause*, whatever its genuine merits, had been marred by its ideological conformity and what one critic has called its "wooden rhetoric indistinguishable from Soviet officialese."[1] When Grossman undertook a sequel to the novel in *Life and Fate*, he seemed to be writing in a new spirit. Driven to find the meaning of his own sufferings, he gained a deeper insight into his characters, and strove for a relentlessly honest portrait of his society, untainted by propaganda. The result was his masterpiece, a work of truly epic scope.

The book was never to be published in the Soviet Union. With what seems in retrospect incredible naiveté, Grossman submitted the manuscript to the editors of *Znamya* in 1960. They returned it to him after a year's delay, announcing that it was anti-Soviet and therefore unpublishable. Shortly afterward, two KGB agents came to Grossman's house to confiscate all traces of the manuscript, including his used typewriter ribbons. Grossman despaired of ever being able to re-create his lost novel; nevertheless he continued to write, leaving unpublished at the time of his death a powerful work of fiction which is less a novel than a series of brilliant sketches or a meditation on the tragic course of Russian history. Like *Life and Fate*, it was eventually smuggled out of the country years after Grossman's death, to be published in the West under the title *Forever Flowing* (1972). Who it was who kept Grossman's manuscripts we do not know. The author himself had no inkling that a copy of his confiscated novel remained at large, and died believing that it would never be released from the archives of the Central Committee.

As for the book itself, is it worth the attention of readers, apart from its curiosity value? In fact, *Life and Fate* possesses literary merits of a high order, but it is difficult to separate historical and political considerations from aesthetic ones in discussing the novel. This is partly by Grossman's own design. Emulating Tolstoy, he attempts to depict nothing less than the spirit of an entire people during the Battle of Stalingrad, and is necessarily as much a witness to history as a creator of an autonomous fictional realm. Using an enormous cast of characters—over 150, by my count—he takes us through all strata of Russian society, from the humblest workers to the tyrant of the Kremlin himself, and in widely ranging settings which include both German and Soviet concentration camps. For once, the methods of "socialist realism" are used to produce not propaganda but a critique of totalitarianism. Grossman's characters, far from being stereotyped Soviet heroes, are human beings in all their idiosyncratic frailties. Like Chekhov, whose spirit is evoked by one of the characters in the book, he aspires to enter imaginatively into the lives of all manner of individuals, and it is a tribute to his novelistic powers that he succeeds to the extent that he does. We see through the eyes of a six-year-old Jewish boy on the way to the gas chambers, the haggard soldiers of General Paulus's encircled army, *zeks* in the gulag at the mercy of their criminal companions, and ordinary citizens struggling to obtain a precious residence permit or to send food parcels to an imprisoned relative.



The most important of Grossman's characters are those who suffer some kind of moral crisis in their hitherto well-ordered lives. Several are devoted Party members who have their faith shaken when they are arrested and sent to camps. Abarchuk, a government official, falls victim during the purges and meets his old teacher who had introduced him to the Party; the disillusioned older man tells him that "no repentance can expiate what we've done," and later hangs himself. Mostovskoy, an old Bolshevik, finds his faith in the Party eroded in a Nazi prisoner of war camp, as he comes to see the parallels between the Soviet and Nazi systems. Krymov, a fanatical Red Army commissar, similarly achieves an education through suffering after his arrest.

But the character whose moral crisis comes closest to Grossman's own is the physicist Viktor Shtrum. Unlike his two brothers-in-law, Krymov and Abarchuk, he is never actually arrested, but he comes within a hair's breadth of it. Modeled in part on the real-life theoretical physicist Lev Davidovich Landau, Viktor shares Grossman's up-and-down ride on fortune's wheel, his anguish over the death of his mother

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[1] Simon Markish, "A Russian Writer's Jewish Fate," *Commentary*, April 1986. Professor Markish's recent book-length study, *Le Cas Grossman* (Paris: Julliard/L'Age d'Homme, 1983), helped make Grossman's *Life and Fate* a best-seller in France, where it came out about the same time in the L'Age d'Homme series. (Markish's original Russian text has also been published in Jerusalem as part of a two-volume selection of Grossman's writings.)

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(murdered by the Nazis in occupied Berdichev), and his guilt over succumbing to the authorities in a moment of weakness: he signs a group letter condemning some Jewish doctors he knows to be innocent of any wrongdoing. Writing from first-hand experience, Grossman is especially skillful at depicting the fluctuating emotional states of a Soviet dissident in all their delicate nuances.

There are numerous other plot lines in this sprawling book, many of them converging to show a colossal historic irony: no sooner had the Russian people managed to defeat Fascism than they were once again beset by the equally terrible tyranny of their own government. Fighting a foreign invader, they enjoyed a brief period of freedom when the machinery of repression was slowed down; once victory was assured, the arrests began all over again. As a panoramic view of life in Stalinist Russia, *Life and Fate* bears comparison with the work of Solzhenitsyn, although Grossman's writing lacks the slavophilia, Christian mysticism, and impatience with democracy that have disturbed some of Solzhenitsyn's Western admirers. An entirely more modest sort of man, Grossman did not see himself as a prophet, nor had he in *Life and Fate* a political program that would bring salvation. Freedom and democracy are necessary for him, of course, but what most concerns him is individual human decency. It is for this reason that he admires Chekhov above all other Russian writers. In place of fanatical idealism—a failing Grossman sees as characteristically Russian—Chekhov embodies a tolerant, humane realism. What also comes through in Grossman's writing is a similar generosity of spirit in the compassionate understanding with which he treats his many characters. More than with most authors, Grossman's virtues as a novelist correspond to his strengths as a human being: a writer whose work was utterly transformed by his moral awakening, he found his voice as an artist when he dared to tell the truth.

One can only hope that American readers make the effort to read this extraordinary novel, despite its enormous size and the additional handicap of its being a sequel to an earlier, untranslated volume. The book does form a self-sufficient unit, but the lack of information about what has come before creates needless confusion for the reader. Since so many characters have already died, divorced, fallen in love, or been arrested by the time *Life and Fate* opens, it is puzzling that the translator did not provide a plot summary of *For a Just Cause* in his otherwise admirable introduction to the later book. Perhaps Harper & Row will tie up the loose plot threads by publishing an English translation of Grossman's earlier work. In the meantime, American audiences can at least be satisfied that they have the better half by far of Grossman's Russian epic—unlike the poor Soviet readers, who are stuck with the portion published during Stalin's lifetime. □

VN: THE LIFE AND ART OF VLADIMIR NABOKOV

Andrew Field/Crown Publishers/$19.95

Charles Nicol

Although born in 1899, Vladimir Nabokov became famous only in 1958 with the American publication of *Lolita*, after he had written a dozen novels in two languages. Between then and his death in 1977, the world caught up with his work. Beneath the brilliant surface of its language lay deep combinations of passion and detachment, of lively parodies and painful memories, of closely observed detail, psychological intensity, and leaps into fantasy. A generation of writers was awed by his ability to transform the novel into a self-referential, lucid maze. As fame invaded his privacy, Nabokov exercised that same control over the public side of his life, carefully affecting an amused, Olympian detachment while privately attempting to control everything written about his personal life. His privacy had always been sacred, and his autobiography, written in 1951 (*Speak, Memory*, one of his best books), told remarkably little about himself; he had been, he wrote, more interested in the patterns of events.

Nabokov's skittishness about publicity was understandable. As the author of a best seller that was in danger of being banned on its initial publication, Nabokov became the target of leering speculation and gross misunderstanding, and doubtless of some unsavory fan mail. Further, his long-standing objections to Freud and Freudian criticism left him hesitant to reveal anything about himself unless it was triple-locked in irony, for all biographical materials are treated as fair game in psychological analyses of an author's works, and the works suddenly become of secondary concern to their relation to their author; Nabokov wanted his works to be the *only* concern of their critics, and he frequently commented that an author's only real biography is in his writings.

Thus Nabokov went to great lengths to control his biography—his unreal life. His will provided that his private papers not be published until fifty years after the deaths of his wife and son. Even his method of composition was protected: he did not wish unfinished manuscripts published. His most extraordinary attempt to maintain biographical control was his unique method of granting interviews: He answered only written questions, in writing, ignoring those questions he disliked and often answering the others in a teasing and elliptical way. Above all, he deflected questions relating his life to his art. It is not surprising that his initial cooperation with Andrew Field's attempts to write his biography ended in acid disagreement.

VN is Field's third book on Nabokov. In 1968 he brought out *Nabokov: His Life in Art*, an important literary study detailing for the first time the significance of Nabokov's writings in Russian, including a vast hoard of then-untranslated material. Scholars have picked holes in the study (and in a book-length bibliography that followed), but nothing has yet replaced it. Field became the logical choice to write an authoritative, authorized biography. He had access to Nabokov's papers, and to Nabokov himself. Then something happened—an argument, or a struggle for control of the future book—and the Nabokov family tried to shut the door on their privacy again, denying access to materials, even attempting to block publication.

The struggle hurt Field's 1977 biography. The photo on the dust jacket of the 1968 study had shown a young man, crew-cut and clean-cut, tentatively smiling in his new suit; the 1977 biography showed Field as a Dostoevskian character in a wrinkled wool shirt, long-haired, bearded, hairy-chested, sucking a ball-point pen, his dark eyes looking with suspicion from behind granny glasses. In the book Field suggested that he and Nabokov were somehow very much alike, and his identification with the author tended to turn his biography into a meditation on how the relationship went wrong. The Nabokov family made their distaste known.

The present study, drawing heavily on the two earlier books, combines biography with literary criticism, mixing genres with mixed results. The primary focus, however, is biographical, and most of Field's notes are to taped interviews with Nabokov's friends, acquaintances, enemies, and relatives, as well as Nabokov himself. Best are Field's background descriptions, especially valuable because Nabokov's generation is fast disappearing. Field's analysis of what Nabokov learned at the Tenishev School, for instance, combines background and literary assumptions in an exemplary way (this description appeared in similar form in his earlier book). His elucidation of literary quarrels among the émigrés in the 1920s and 1930s is also valuable and more relevant to Nabokov's novels, where echoes of old wars can still be heard. Unfortunately, Field's summaries of literary battles tend to slide into back-fence chatter, and at his worst, Field lapses into whispers of tabloid scandal: "There are grounds to suppose that Nabokov never intended for the details of his life to be known. It is the purpose of this book to describe that secret life." To the extent that this statement smacks of the sensational it can be dismissed, but the book cannot be dismissed as easily; as the result of Field's twenty-five years of research, it has substantial value.

What exactly is supposed to be Nabokov's secret life? As in his earlier biography, Field is rather comically concerned with discussing rumors that royal bastardy occurred in the Nabokov family two generations prior to Vladimir; he also persists in discussing homosexuality among Nabokov's relatives, especially his brother and uncle (but this was not exactly a secret, since descriptions of those relatives in Nabokov's autobiography elliptically refer to it). Further, Field has now produced what he and Nabokov had apparently referred to as his Don Juan List, brief mentions of many women with whom VN had affairs as a young man, which hardly seems a secret either. (He apparently carried on several involvements simultaneously.) Mercifully, Field does not suggest that Nabokov needed to prove he was the straightest of the straight to compensate for homosexuals in the family tree. But Field does aim some new pot shots. He claims that Nabokov drank heavily in his last years, and also that he had several affairs in Europe some years after becoming a married man—contentions disputed by Nabokov's son

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Charles Nicol, professor of English at Indiana State University, edited Nabokov's Fifth Arc.

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and executor, Dmitri. Still, true or false, such foibles would not constitute, to my mind, much of a secret life. Nabokov's concerns for his privacy were elsewhere—and turned out to be justified. The real "secrets" in this book turn out to be scandals only in the literary sense; Field's most dubious moments are his unlikely revelations about the relationships of Nabokov's writings and his life.

What worried Nabokov was the possible confusion of life and art. Field spectacularly achieves this confusion. His most sensational—and sensationally wrong—connection between life and art is his argument that when Nabokov wrote letters to his mother (she died in the 1930s), he addressed her as Lolita:

> What sort of brazen compulsion, the ultimate gesture of contempt for everything Freudian, brought Nabokov to use a version of his mother's nickname for the heroine of his greatest novel? The nickname was Lolya. Photocopies of the letters by Nabokov to his mother that were given to me have one word cut out: the salutation. It is a word about seven letters long and with the tail or hat of Nabokov's Russian *t* often showing clearly below or above the cut-out space. Lolita, surely.

Notice that Field is reading what actually couldn't be read—and then assuming that the one word he wasn't supposed to see was therefore of incredible importance. Of course, the novel *Lolita* is, among other things, "the ultimate gesture of contempt for everything Freudian," but Field is unable to see the kinds of lines Nabokov drew between his privacy and his work. As might have been suspected (the argument about the nickname doesn't even *sound* convincing), Field is wrong. Dmitri Nabokov has not only disputed this particular item, but totally destroyed it: the actual correspondence merely includes a Russian term of endearment, not a name at all. The kindest thing one could say about this particular mistake is that it exhibits a wild audacity.

To the extent that this is a psychological biography, Field neatly sidesteps the Freudian issue by suggesting a psychological pattern for Nabokov and his writings that antedates Freud, the label of "narcissism" drawn from Havelock Ellis, Nabokov's own favorite author of case studies. When Field describes Nabokov as a narcissist, he means, apparently, that Nabokov was always the center of an admiring universe at home, and grew up "with an invincible aura of confidence not only in himself but in his ability to re-create reality at will." Field makes some interesting references to the novels, but it is certainly debatable whether, even if Nabokov used Ellis's notion in his works, the same label can be extended to Nabokov himself. Field, who very much admires most of the novels up through *Pale Fire* (to which he devotes a chapter), dislikes the last three, starting with *Ada*, which he finds verbose and self-indulgent. For him they are too self-reflective, as though the novelist had finally become trapped in himself, unable to distinguish his real life from his fame. There is some merit to this argument, but one cannot help suspect that this unsympathetic portrait of Nabokov's final works and days is still colored by Nabokov's earlier rejection of Field himself. Reading this literary biography is like digging for clams in the sand and then washing more sand out of the clams. What's left is fresh and slippery—if you can keep the grit out of your teeth. □

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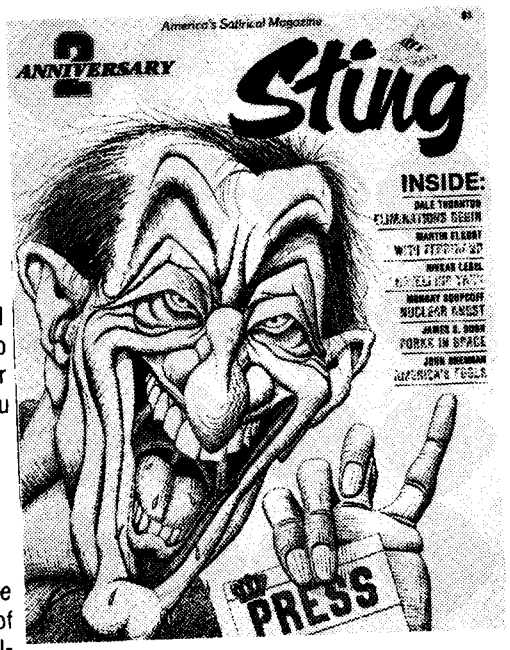

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CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 9)

Appointment Botches

Someone must rise to the defense of Fred Barnes who is the most perceptive and readable conservative around. His exchange with Tim W. Ferguson (Correspondence, *TAS*, November 1986) leaves an important issue in need of further comment.

Ferguson writes, " . . . the election of any Democrat . . . would lead to the filling of countless mid- to upper-level posts with appointees drawn from the Democratic party's bank of political operatives." Yes, and this is unfortunate, but maybe less unfortunate than the alternative, which is a Republican administration which botches its own appointments so pathetically.

Any presidential administration has the opportunity, and obligation, to use its appointment powers to run the executive branch. Typically, Democratic administrations understand this function as legitimate and important, and approach it professionally and without apology, however partisan. Republican administrations view the same role with discomfort: somewhat embarrassed and disdainful. So they select people sharing the same mentality, often taking an adversarial posture with respect to the very organizations they set out to administer.

Four successive Republican administrations have demonstrated this sad phenomenon for all to see, yet one looks in vain for any sign that the message gets through. There is, of course, no such thing as a Republican "bank of political operatives," to the detriment of conservative interests. In making its appointments the Reagan Administration went heavily to fund raisers and to cronies, without regard to useful experience, or competence, or in many cases to any genuine interest in the nature of the work at hand.

So, with notable exceptions, the Reagan appointments have ranged from mediocre to seriously damaging. The result overall is one of embarrassment to conservatives, to Republicans, and to the national interest. A recent example is the case of Mr. Peter Voss, but the list is long. Perhaps this is what Mr. Barnes had in mind in his mention of Senator Bradley.

One of the big secrets of Washington is that Republican Presidents could, if they tried, find appointees who are at once well qualified and prepared to give real support to responsible conservative goals. That they so blissfully scorn this potential is curious indeed. All this may not cause many conservatives to vote Democratic, but it certainly gives pause and merits thoughtful attention. Give Fred Barnes a break.

—Stan Langland
Belmont, California

Lunacy

Franz M. Oppenheimer wishes readers to share his belief that France's recent firm rejection of socialism proves the "soundness" at her "core" ("The Paradoxes of French Politics," *TAS*, October 1986). If "soundness" means continuity with French political mistakes of the past, then I would agree. But if we are supposed to buy the argument that France's political life has taken a turn for the saner, then I would direct Mr. Oppenheimer to an article that appeared in the *Washington Times* on November 7, 1986. In an interview with Arnaud de Borchgrave, Mr. Jacques Chirac claimed that the notorious plot to blow up the El Al flight from London to Tel Aviv was in fact a scheme cooked up between Israel's Mossad and "renegade factions . . . in Assad's entourage," and not, as the British courts found, and as the Israelis contend (and as the rest of the world believes), a terrorist plan backed by the Syrian government to

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destroy a vulnerable Israeli target.

The source for this charge was the testimony of Helmut Kohl and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, whose "conclusions" were cited as the sole evidence upon which Mr. Chirac based his statements. Not a shred of hard evidence was advanced as far as I could read. Only the belief (one is tempted to use the word faith) that the Israelis would be savage, cruel, and diabolical enough to sacrifice 376 people (the overwhelming majority of whom were certainly Jews of whatever nationality) in order to disgrace Assad and bring down his regime. The de Borchgrave article stated that Mr. Chirac deemed any evidence obtained by "all Western intelligence sources as worthless," although he did allow that he did not know "the real truth" about the attempted sabotage "because he had not seen the complete dossier of the case." How wondrous a thing is faith!

I don't want to make too much of one interview. But this is a shocking charge, which if true would totally destroy the Israelis' moral position, force many sympathetic people to turn against them in utter disgust (including not a few Jews), and would reveal the British courts and intelligence community as retarded dupes. In plain language, this is exactly what Mr. Chirac is charging—that the Israelis are would-be murderers utterly callous to the loss of human life and that the British are too stupid to see what is staring him and his German buddies right in the face. It is more likely that this is a baseless, loony conceit. In that case, this symbol of the resurgence of an intellectually respectable French right is guilty of espousing lunatic beliefs passed on to him by the highest ministers of the German government. Have we not seen this kind of madness before? (We have that sort here, too, of course, but they are usually to be found either with the Liberty Lobby or the Spartacist Youth Revolutionary League.) And if the leader of French conservatism, touted by Mr. Oppenheimer as an exemplar of pro-American moderation, espouses lunatic beliefs, tinged with a very old and very nasty form of hatred, what does that tell us about the country he represents?

—Diane Ezer
Queens Village, New York

Franz M. Oppenheimer replies:
Diane Ezer's belief that Prime Minister Chirac accused the Israelis of being "would-be murderers . . . savage, cruel, and diabolical enough to sacrifice 376 people" is mistaken in two respects. First, he was careful not to embrace wholeheartedly the allegedly German hypothesis of the Hindawi terror plot's having been the work of the Israeli Mossad, saying "I don't go as far as they [Helmut Kohl and Hans-Dietrich Genscher] do." Second, even if we accept solely for the sake of argument the admittedly far-out hypothesis of an Israeli plot, the charge of would-be murder would fail, for it was Israeli security that discovered the explosive matter after the suitcase containing it had been cleared by airport security procedures and before it could be put on the plane. So, if Israeli intelligence had wanted to create the impression of a terrorist plot, they also saw to it that the plot could not be carried out.

M. Chirac's rather bizarre remark, when read in the context of the entire interview, hardly makes him guilty of "lunatic beliefs." His principal thesis that Moslem fundamentalism sponsored by Iran constitutes the overwhelming threat to the West may be debatable, but it is a thesis shared by many well-informed Americans, and so is his belief that mere barking at Syria and Libya is counterproductive.

In attributing to me the belief "that France's recent . . . rejection of socialism proves the 'soundness' at her 'core,' " Diane Ezer stands my article on its head. I said the exact opposite: France's core is sound because the present majority *and* the Socialist opposition share our commitment to the political and military defense of Western Europe against the Soviet menace.

How Supreme the Court?
In an otherwise excellent article on Pat Robertson in the November *TAS*, Dinesh D'Souza is certainly permitted one lapse, but a lapse it remains. In that piece ("Pat Robertson's World"), Mr. D'Souza commented that Robertson's remarks to the effect that a Supreme Court ruling is not the law, and that "the framers did not intend to give the Supreme Court final authority over the Constitution," is in conflict with the whole tradition of judicial review kicked off by Chief Justice Marshall in 1803.

I do not think it is quibbling to note that the role of the Supreme Court as final arbiter of disputes over specific applications or interpretations of the Constitution in discrete cases does not make the Supreme Court the "final authority over the Constitution." The court simply is not to the Constitution what the Pope is to Catholic doctrine. The Supreme Court's interpretations of the Constitution are not equivalent to the provisions of the Constitution itself, and in this sense are not the supreme law of the land. Chief Justice Marshall's understanding of judicial review—and until recently the "legal tradition" it spawned—did not take a different view. *Marbury* v. *Madison* may have established the court as constitutional referee, but not as constitutional law-giver.

Indeed, in a republic where the authority to govern that legitimates all law is based on the consent of the governed, any different jurisprudence does violence to a tradition significantly predating the doctrine of judicial review. When the Supreme Court's constitutional rulings are viewed as tantamount to provisions of our fundamental law, they are in effect amendments to the Constitution and are arrogations of legislative power by an unelected judiciary. Under such a view, five of the nine Justices could determine or modify the fundamental political, economic, social, and cultural arrangements of the whole nation—an effect clearly repugnant to representative government—and do so for all time, or at least until five Justices decide to change the "supreme law" the court has created.

Of course, even the Constitution, the genuine supreme law of the land, was not intended to be immutable. For that reason, the Constitution sets out the process for its own amendment. But here again, the process in essence seeks the consent of those who will be governed by a proposed amendment before it is adopted.

It is a commonplace to those literate in constitutional history—of which Mr. D'Souza is one—that Lincoln, in his debates with Stephen Douglas over the *Dred Scott* case, rejected the idea that a Supreme Court decision is something other than a judicial interpretation of the Constitution. Lincoln fully embraced the notion that all branches of government have a responsibility to interpret the Constitution faithfully, and indeed private citizens have the liberty, the right, to do so. Thus, Robertson's views, if I understand them correctly, represent an honorable legal tradition supported by some of the best minds in our legal heritage.

To be sure, the courts must resolve differences of constitutional interpretation when they arise in discrete conflicts between private or governmental parties, a role having great significance beyond the realm of merely "legal" issues. Yet today we hardly need fear that the power of the courts will be given too short a shrift. In these circumstances, innocently accepting the premises of extreme judicial power can encourage the continued erosion of constitutional government.

—Robert J. Cynkar
Deputy Assistant Attorney General
Civil Division
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.

Dinesh D'Souza replies:
In any system that operates by rule of law, it seems obvious that, in the event of disputed interpretations, somebody must be in charge of telling us what the

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laws mean. In the case of the Catholic Church this is the Pope. In the case of the Constitution it is the Supreme Court. Now the court is far from infallible, and has admitted as much in its historic reversals of precedent. But there cannot be any practical difference between what the Constitution says, and what the court says it says. Judges do not have the authority to make law, but they do have the role of defining it. Thus while it is legitimate to criticize court rulings and to try and persuade the court to reverse them at a later date, it would be a formula for lawlessness to say that Supreme Court rulings do not have the force of law, and that the executive branch should not feel bound to enforce such rulings when they are handed down.

Pat Robertson has said that, if he were elected President, he would adopt his own, and not the court's, interpretation of the Constitution. This is very much the way many Protestant churches approach Scripture—to each his own interpretation—and that is precisely the reason there are so many Protestant sects. But civil law would never work under this principle, where each citizen and each branch of government simply followed the tenets of the Constitution as they saw fit. What *Marbury* v. *Madison* did was solve the ambiguity in the original Constitution about just who says what exactly the law is when controversies arise. Chief Justice Marshall established what needed to be established—a governing authority. And it was the Supreme Court.

Marshall's was not an outrageous choice. In a tripartite system of checks and balances, the Supreme Court seems the logical arbiter of constitutional meaning. Hamilton in *The Federalist* simply assumes this is so. Every President has reconciled himself to it. And the American people seem comfortable with the rule, if not with all its particular applications. They know that the judiciary, while clearly the most independent branch of government, is indirectly responsive to the will of the people. Citizens elect the President who appoints judges and the senators who confirm them, and they can amend the Constitution whose meaning the judges decipher.

There is no question that there are judges on the court who are distorting and perverting the Constitution, and are proud of the fact. But the solution is not to deny their power of judicial review, but to persuade them of the error of their ways and, that failing, to replace them with people who will exercise their judicial role with greater responsibility and good sense.

Appalled

It has been my custom for some time to send a copy of every bizarre, outrageous, or downright stupid item I find in print to the editors of my favorite features in *The American Spectator*, namely "The Continuing Crisis" and "Current Wisdom." I recently came across yet another gem:

> Some conservatives want to curb abortion, pornography, drugs, and softball, and out at the feverish fringes, even birth control. . . . Among Reaganites born after 1960, there is a different agenda. They want lower taxes. . . . They are not about to have their lives shaped by any fundamentalist preacher.

This bit of disinformation perpetuates the liberal myths that President Reagan's popularity is due exclusively to "pocketbook issues" and that all of his youthful supporters are materialistic yuppies who have sold their souls for thirty pieces of silver.

Furthermore, the writer makes a burlesque out of the conservative agenda on the so-called "social issues." There is no comparison between the unspeakable evil of slaughtering innocent babies and the endemic vices of pornography and drug addiction.

Abortion, like slavery, violates one of the inalienable rights explicitly enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, a document whose author was neither a fundamentalist preacher nor an agent of the Pope. While many prolifers quote Scripture, as did many abolitionists, the evil of abortion was known even to the pagan Hippocrates. Abortion, again like slavery, must eventually be eliminated, not merely "curbed."

Voyeurs and dope fiends—like the proverbial poor—we will always have with us. Yet, despite the protestations of liberals and libertarians, pandering to their vices is not a victimless crime. How many lives, families and neighborhoods have to be destroyed before we, as fellow citizens, exercise some fraternal correction?

It is true that some of us at "the feverish fringes" believe that the natural operations of neither the marketplace nor the reproductive system ought to be regulated by artificial means. Yet it is common knowledge that we represent a small segment of the conservative movement and are not likely to get a plank on the next Republican platform.

The line about softball was a gratuitous barb. Real conservatives always insist on playing hardball, but we respect the rights and tolerate the alternative lifestyles of softball aficionados.

What disgusting rag would stoop to publishing such mindless drivel? One is tempted to round up the usual suspects: *New York Times, Washington Post, Village Voice, Rolling Stone, New Republic, Nation, Mother Jones*, and *Ms.* Yet the guilty publication is none other than *The American Spectator* and the author no less a personage than Professor Jeffrey Hart (see "Two More Years: A Final Reagan Agenda," *TAS*, October 1986).

My profound disappointment is too deep for tears. —*Kevin G. Long*
Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Legal Services Scandals

Congratulations to Rael Jean Isaac on her LSC article ("Legal Services and the Farmer," *TAS*, November 1986), although for one who has supported the idea of legal assistance to the poor, it causes almost overwhelming sadness. LSC is not just another instance of governmental destruction of a fine idea. The facts are much worse.

They show political projects imposed upon captive poor persons; economic deprivation knowingly inflicted upon the poor; an institutional structure designed to deprive the poor of assistance, and the brutal use of state power to intimidate creative workers and persons. The record of events in LSC permits the suggestion that it should be nominated as the ugliest and dirtiest private corporation in twentieth-century America. But this alone is not its distinction. There is the additional fact that it is owned and operated by the Congress of the United States, and that its abuse is congressionally derived, and legislatively and administratively accepted. The Congress will not control it. It approves and expands it. There is reason for this.

LSC is a political-corporate giant. In any situation, it can deal with the Congress, or the Reagan Administration and its appointees, as it might wish.

In 1981 the *net income* of LSC was larger than General Motors Corporation. It had 2,000 lawyers more than the entire Department of Justice. In 1982, its *net income* was larger than every bank in the United States, except five. . . . In 1982, the net income of CBS . . . was less than half of LSC's net income. LSC's net income refers only to the dollars directly allocated to LSC in congressional cash. There is much, much more in indirect cash allocations from the Congress, and judicial and state sources.

In my judgment, its political side operates the strongest political network in the U.S. today. It can directly affect every local election. It can substantially affect the election of U.S. senators and congressmen in every state, or local city council members, local bond issues . . . and mayors and governors and aldermen. It appears to have asserted influence in some Protestant and Catholic Church programs. There is strong evidence . . . that LSC first organized the so-called "Sanctuary Movement" . . .

A week before Mr. Reagan became President in January 1981, one LSC regional office had $19 million in cash, which was to be used to oppose, it seems, every political initiative which the 1981 Reagan Administration might make in that region. . . . There were nine regional offices in 1981. In 1984, Walter Mondale received $9 million in federal matching funds, for his presidential campaign. This is less than half of the political funds available in just one LSC regional office three years earlier. . . .

Rael Isaac is entirely correct in saying that the major scandal of the Reagan years is permitting LSC to continue "its abusive course unchecked." In this, the Reagan Administration failed to support its LSC Board members (and I was one of those), which was a scandalous abuse of its own personnel; it is an Administration social scandal because it fails to relieve American workers . . . from this social cancer now fully metastasized. It is a political scandal because the Administration fails to protect the natural American political system from this massive injection of federal cash and federal political networking. The last is a deadly serious matter.

In October 1986, several [Administration] advisers . . . decided to support Senator Rudman and his successful drive to make the LSC political apparatus totally immune from every practical form of check and control (an immunity which the Democratic and Republican parties have never enjoyed). They gave approval to the potentially direct injection of millions of "LSC dollars" into the November 1986 U.S. Senate races across the country. . . . It is quite possible that the Administration and Senator Rudman approved and voted the money which substantially assisted in removing the Republican majority in the Senate.

It is not that Mr. Reagan's wise advisers, or "informed-Hill people," and the Republicans, did not know. They knew. The conservatives, such as Bill Buckley, Walter Williams, Joe Sobran, and many others, told them. They knew and in 1986 they said about LSC what they have said every year since 1980: "We cannot be bothered, this small thing is not part of our large thoughts, so to hell with it." Now they cannot give that response to 55 Democrats in the Senate, although perhaps they might wonder how they got there, and why so many razor-thin Senate races went against them.

—*William F. Harvey*
Carl M. Gray Professor of Law
Indiana University School of Law
Indianapolis, Indiana
(In 1982 the writer served as Chairman of the Board of the Legal Services Corporation.) □

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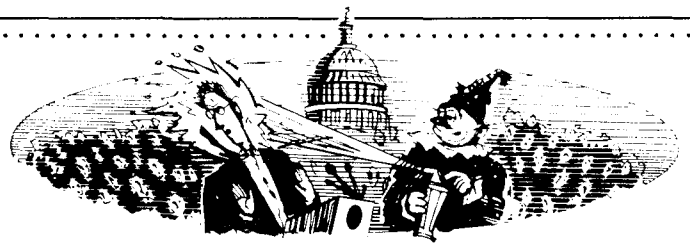

As my coryphaeus, Mr. George Will, has noted before, and often, the single most salient feature on the face of modern American political culture is precisely this: left-wingers seem to almost always get the pretty girls. If that statement lacks the usual Georgewillian force and exactitude (note the enervating "seem" and "almost," and the egregiously split infinitive), it nonetheless strikes the Georgewillian note of truth. Some will doubtless demur, pointing to the corridors of the Republican National Committee where nowadays a legion of sleek young professional women stride, confident of their looks if not their conservative credentials. In response Mr. Will would remark on the undependability of the rank-and-file, the demos, and seal his argument with a quote from an unpublished Tocqueville letter or a citation from an early draft of *Federalist 10*. I prefer to point to experience. In 1984, while Democratic candidates were on the hustings accompanied by Rosanna Arquette, Linda Ronstadt, Tina Turner, Darryl Hannah, and suchlike, the Reagan-Bush campaign, by my reckoning, came up with exactly one female star from the Hollywood firmament to glamorize their rallies, and that female star was Pearl Bailey. Case closed.

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The point was hammered home yet again when I read the press release from the Great Peace March for Global Nuclear Disarmament, which contained the fetching information that Lindsay Wagner, the erstwhile star of "The Bionic Woman" and the enduring, willowy presence of my adolescent daydreams, was to be emcee of the March's penultimate rally in Lafayette Park. I went to the rally, and the final one that followed it at the Lincoln Memorial, largely from that inducement. Who, I wondered, could the Reaganites have wheeled out from Hollywood to host a similar rally for, say, SDI? June Allyson? Martha Rae? But considering that they had the Bionic Woman for a mistress of ceremonies, and considering that they had staggered 3700 miles for 260 days across the continent, the marchers seemed understandably disappointed at the turnout for their Welcome-to-Washington party. Publicity put the number of coast-to-coast marchers at about 400 (the real figure, one marcher told me, couldn't have been higher than 250), and both rallies peaked at about 1500 congregants. This is doubly discouraging in light of the admirable campaign the *Post* waged in the week before the marchers' arrival to create interest in their trek—a cover story in the Sunday magazine, and, in the paper itself, six stories before and during the festivities, with maps explaining where in the city the marchers would be, and at what time of day. The magazine story was written by an extremely irenic fellow named Mike Sager, who offered the prettiest formulation of the march's *raison d'être*: "They are marching to reach the roots of the country, the grassroots, the real people, and to turn them on, to empower them with the feeling that real people can make a difference in the politics of a nation, that desires can, sometimes, trickle up instead of down, that sane thinking can prevail . . ." and so on, in the rolling, exhortatory rhythms of a prose poem. Even in Reagan's America, the *Post* never says die.

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But in Reagan's America, too, even the *Post* must know its limits. At the park the scattered crowd was oddly listless, and on the cold gray afternoon not even Lindsay Wagner could provoke passion—although this may have just been me; when, sweaty-palmed, I crept up to interview her, I saw that her attention was distracted by maternal worries over her own two children, and I have never thought of her in a maternal way. Only my leathery faced colleague, William "Good Writer" Greider, the Washington correspondent for *Rolling Stone*, seemed to find promising portents in the languid character of the day's events, but then reality has seldom inhibited his views in the past. The ragtag faithful clustered around signs stenciled with the names of their home states and home countries. California had a good turnout, of course, as did Australia. (At one point Betty Thomas, the star of "Hill Street Blues," announced from the stage that "in the audience today we have twenty-five students from a place I remember very well, a little place called Kent State!"—and at last there were prolonged cheers.) Off to the side, I saw a woman alone on a park bench, holding a stenciled sign marked "Soviet Union." At first she wouldn't tell me her name—"The FBI, Casey, they harass me endlessly"—but finally, in a vague accent, she said it was Gabi. Are you from the Soviet Union? I asked. "Only in my heart," she said, raising her hand to her breast. "Which is why I labor tirelessly to have Washington named the sister city of Moscow. Mr. Gorbachev, he is very enthusiastic, but Reagan and Casey, they will never allow it. And they will not let me move to the Soviet Union, of course . . ." She continued, endlessly, tirelessly, and was beginning to tell me of heroic Soviet exploits against the *mujahedeen* when a pert young woman broke into our conversation, deferentially, and identified herself as a second-grade teacher from Michigan. She wondered if perhaps Gabi could help her arrange a Great Peace March through the Soviet Union. "Oh, my dear, why?" Gabi asked. "There is no need for one there. The Russians, they are poets, they are not a practical people, they do not understand the weapons of war." The schoolteacher smiled sweetly and said, "Perhaps you're right," and I stumbled away, full of gratitude for June Allyson, and for Pearl Bailey too.

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Ever wonder what Jesse Jackson is up to on days when he's not attending a state funeral in Mozambique or crashing a memorial service for Len Bias? Well, like everyone else who wants to matter in this world, he just might be flying the Eastern shuttle from Washington to New York. When I first saw him in the Eastern lounge at National, the moment seemed uneventful. He was giving phone to someone before boarding, and his party included Roger Wilkins, a good friend of the Institute for Policy Studies. Naturally, Jesse got the best seat in the plane, front row, aisle. To his credit he was wearing a rather modest darkish blue suit, which accentuated his husky build, and an equally modest striped shirt with white collar. As he quietly worked the plane before takeoff, he put young women at ease with an eye and a smile. Fifty minutes later at LaGuardia, he and his group were met near the gate by three of New York's finest, who'd be escorting Jesse's Mercedes into the city. This is when I headed for the men's room before my own trip into Manhattan. But just as I was washing my hands, Jesse walked in, faced a urinal, and before I'd finished drying mine he flushed and headed straight for the door, his hands unwashed. Third World politics, Third World manners, you say? But then again, maybe it's not fair to single Jesse out for what, after all, is a common behavioral pattern among American men. Or so I thought until I saw a photograph in the next day's *New York Times* of Jesse in the company of seven youngsters from a "Children of War" tour it turns out he'd gone to New York to help launch. Not only was he wearing the same clothes I saw him in, but those same two hands were on the shoulders of several of the children. Can anyone come up with a better reason still for staying away from Jesse? —*GJN*

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CURRENT WISDOM

The Great Books Series

Dr. Helen Caldicott nabbed once again with her luminous mind in the gutter:

The hideous weapons of mass genocide may be symptoms of several male emotions reflecting inadequate sexuality, a need continually to prove virility, and a primitive fascination with killing. I recently watched a filmed launching of an MX missile. It rose slowly from the ground, surrounded by smoke and flames, and elongated into the air. It was a very sexual sight indeed; more so when armed with the ten warheads it will explode with the most almighty orgasm. The names used by the military are laden with psychosexual overtones: missile erector, thrust-to-weight ratio, soft laydown, deep penetration, hard line, and soft line. A McDonnell Douglas advertisement for a new weapons system proudly proclaims that it can "shoot down whatever's up, and blow up whatever's down." . . . The American missiles are smaller than the Soviet missiles, a fact that is used to good advantage by the generals to persuade Congress of the need for more money. Boeing constructed a model of the different sizes of missiles, painting the American ones blue and the Soviet ones red. The generals take this model to House and Senate hearings to say: "But Senator, how do you feel when America has these small blue missiles and Russia has these great big red missiles?"

They always get what they ask for. . . . [*from* Missile Envy: The Arms Race and Nuclear War, *by Dr. Helen Caldicott. Bantam special revised edition, 1986]*

Newsweek

A Planned Parenthood quoque begins to doubt:

"I don't think that third graders are going to be able to process things about anal sex and oral sex and needles," says Susan Newcomer, director of education for Planned Parenthood. "I think they can learn that AIDS is a disease that you don't get from your little friends."

[November 3, 1986]

Progressive

In the pages of the stalwart *Progressive*, the kind of astute historical observation we comrades have come to expect:

As Robert Karl Manoff reported in "Only in Amerika" (Media, October issue), an estimated sixty million viewers will be treated to the horrors of a fictional Soviet occupation of the United States in the forthcoming ABC miniseries, "Amerika." But, in fact, it was the United States that invaded the Soviet Union and occupied large areas around Archangel and Vladivostok in 1918-1919. More than 400 Yanks and thousands of Red Army defenders died in bitter winter fighting.

Few Americans have ever heard of these events. Ronald Reagan said, "I don't know why the Russians are so paranoid. We've never done anything to them." However, every Russian school child knows.

[November 1986]

Parade

The TV mind makes bold to ask a TV question and gets a TV answer:

Q. *I have watched Dan Rather, Peter Jennings and Tom Brokaw give the evening news on TV for a long time. Still I am unable from their newscasts to determine their political leanings. They seem not to have a hill of beans between them. Are they conservatives, liberals, radicals, Republicans, Democrats, Socialists or some of each?*
—S.J., Englewood, N.J.

A. Rather, Jennings and Brokaw try mightily to be impartial in presenting the news. Your admission that you cannot find any political bias in their presentations is a tribute to their professionalism and continued success—certainly insofar as you are concerned—in keeping their programs fair, evenhanded and nonpartisan.

[November 9, 1986]

Rolling Stone

How urban sophisticates live, as reported in the intellectual *RS*:

Jillette, a closet rock scholar, still treasures the memory of a concert in San Francisco several years ago, at which he fought his way to a front-row seat. "I was sitting there, and there was Iggy up onstage with his dick hanging out. He leaned down, grabbed me by the collar, pulled me up hard and said, *'You eat dog food!'* To which I responded, 'Yes, I do, Mr. Pop.' " Jillette sighs, "I really have no understanding that the masses don't know Iggy. He's been the number-one superstar for me, and for everybody I know, for ten, fifteen years."

[November 20, 1986]

PC World

Interlarded within a report on the growing computer industry, a bizarre lament over life in the Peach State:

Now, it's extremely important to recognize that gay people are among the foremost contributors to the creation, success, and fulfillment of the personal computer vision.

Many programmers, designers, and engineers who happen to be gay have been the brains behind some of the most significant products that helped revolutionize our information-driven society.

How can people who are gay feel secure living in Georgia when an inhumane law hangs over their heads like the sword of Damocles?

[November 1986]

Harvard Crimson

Learning the hard way as related by Bruce C. Williams of the Ethiopian Orthodox Coptic Church to fifty students of venerable Harvard:

When six soldiers raped the four-year-old daughter of a peasant family he had befriended in Cuba and then dismembered the entire family, Williams said he realized the Marxist cause was not genuinely reformist.

[March 12, 1986]

San Diego Tribune

Proof that Mr. Ivan Boesky may be down but not out:

Paid Advertising

MY SISTER WAS RAISED TO LIVE LIKE a Jewish American Princess. But at 19, she dropped out of college to be a scullery maid on the sailboat, "Polynesia." At 25, she married a Florida cop. She was a tremendous disappointment to her family. Now in 1986, having participated in the feminist and sexual revolutions, having survived the death of the Kennedys, having suffered through a short and unfulfilling marriage, my sister is prepared to fulfill her destiny: to have her fingernails and toenails done weekly; to shop for jewelry, face powders, perfumes and fine clothes; to take month-long ski trips to resorts around the world; to own Porsches, and to spend money as effortlessly as she drinks water. She is, to put it bluntly, tired of working. It's as simple as that.

If you're wealthy, single, and my sister sounds like she would be a lot of fun, drop her a line. Include a picture. All sincere replies will be answered in kind. Box K-88, Union-Tribune, San Diego, CA 92112.

[September 18, 1986]

Washington Post

Another incoherent soliloquy from Old Blunderbuss:

In fact, Tip O'Neill's enduring legacy may not be his tenure as speaker or his stewardship of the Democratic Party, but his simple and yet all too rare ability to find his way home.

As O'Neill puts it, "The home, the family. That you have a roof over your head. That you have a meal. That you have heat. That you can educate your kids better than you were . . . but more than anything else, that you have some time with them. That you have some recreation. That's what life is all about. That's what the home is all about, that's what the family is all about. We never had that 50 years ago."

[October 7, 1986]

San Diego Union

Another New Age Liberal prepares for her day in court:

Case study: A Normal Heights woman who for years has accused Police Chief Bill Kolender of planting midgets or androids in her attic to spy on her, has a lawyer to take her case. Atty. Eric Dierker, who does not himself believe Kolender planted the midgets or androids, nonetheless holds police responsible for his client's "delusion." He's suing the city and Kolender on behalf of his client for "negligent infliction of emotional distress." He says police failed to show "legitimate concern" and made jokes that reinforced his client's delusions. Dierker, who insists his client leads an otherwise "better than normal life" and is financially secure, says he'll leave specific dollar damages up to a jury. He declines to say whether he's taken the case for a flat fee or on contingency.

[October 22, 1986]

Vegetarian Times

Learned elucubrations from the Hon. Andrew Jacobs, a United States Congressman and—more amazing still—Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Health:

I'm in no better position than anyone else to say what nature does, but it's my own metaphilosophical view and suspicion that nature strikes back at violence to itself. And I think there may also be locked in nature some sort of reward if you rise above the other predatory animals on earth.

I know nature created the predatory animals, but there's a lot of evidence that we're not one of them. First of all, the predatory animals—carnivores—generally have very short intestines. Humans do not. Humans have intestines that match the victims of the predators. The vegetarian animals of the earth have the longer intestines; so if you want a hint from nature whether we're supposed to head toward civilization or the jungle, my guess is that we're supposed to head toward civilization.

I think, then, that it's also a little bit insulting to us that we're not higher animals than the ones in the jungle that tear innocent animals into pieces. I can't explain why nature has that happen or arranges the food cycle in that way; all I know is that most of the animals that are eaten do not eat other animals. We have the ingenuity to avoid being eaten by tigers, and it seems to me that we should have the ethics then not to kill animals that aren't threatening us.

[November 1986]

Minneapolis Star and Tribune

Reflections on the humanistic nature of the sage of Libya from Dr. Frank Clancy, free-lance writer:

It is Khadafy's very humanness that makes him so perplexing, and that makes our response to him, and to terrorism, so problematic: No matter what his transgressions, Khadafy is still a human being with human hopes and dreams. To acknowledge that is frightening because we must then acknowledge that Khadafy, and all terrorists, are to some extent like us. Yet that is necessary if we are to respond effectively—and morally.

[October 7, 1986]

New York Times

Evidence mounts of the Republic's desperate need for animal rights:

Police are investigating the death of a 58-year-old man, who was found in an Upper West Side apartment with numerous stab wounds. A search of the apartment, at 115 West 71st Street, also found a machete, feathers arranged near an altar, several dead chickens and one live chicken, the police said.

A Police Department spokesman, Sgt. John Venetucci, said the man identified as Nicholas Diaz, was found at 4 P.M. Friday by the building superintendent, who noticed a foul odor coming from the apartment. Mr. Diaz was the godfather of Erik Estrada, a star of the television series "CHiPs."

[November 9, 1986]

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